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M. L'ABBÉ F. CHS. BEAUBIEN

Curé du Sault-au-Récollet.

LES AMEN

MONSABRÉ

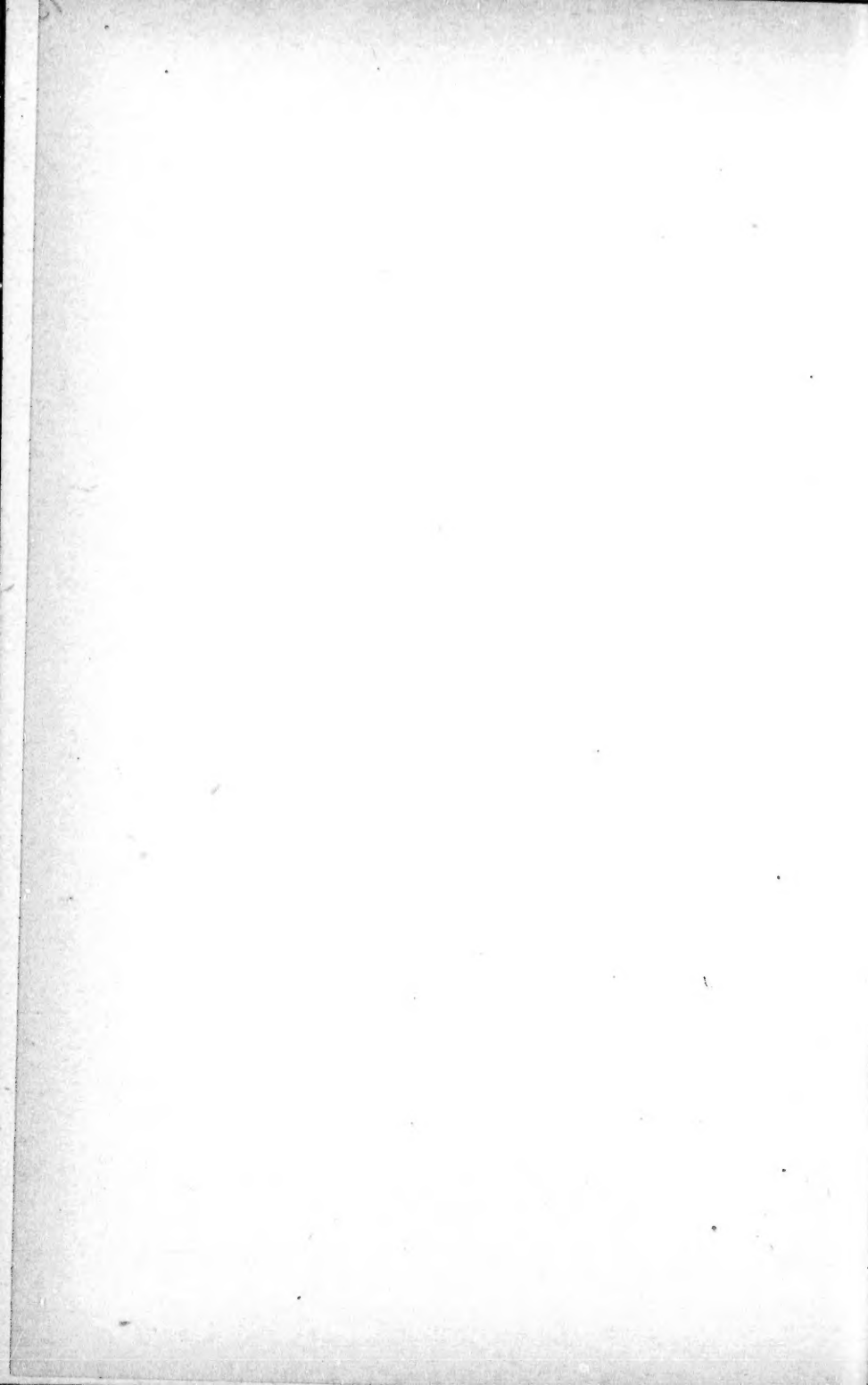


Conférence faite au Cercle Ville-Marie
de Montréal. •



MONTRÉAL
EUSÈBE SENÉCAL & FILS, IMPRIMEURS-ÉDITEURS.
20, rue Saint-Vincent.

—
1892



LES AMEN

DE

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M. L'ABBÉ F. CHS. BEAUBIEN

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Lecture faite au Cercle Ville-Marie
de Montréal.

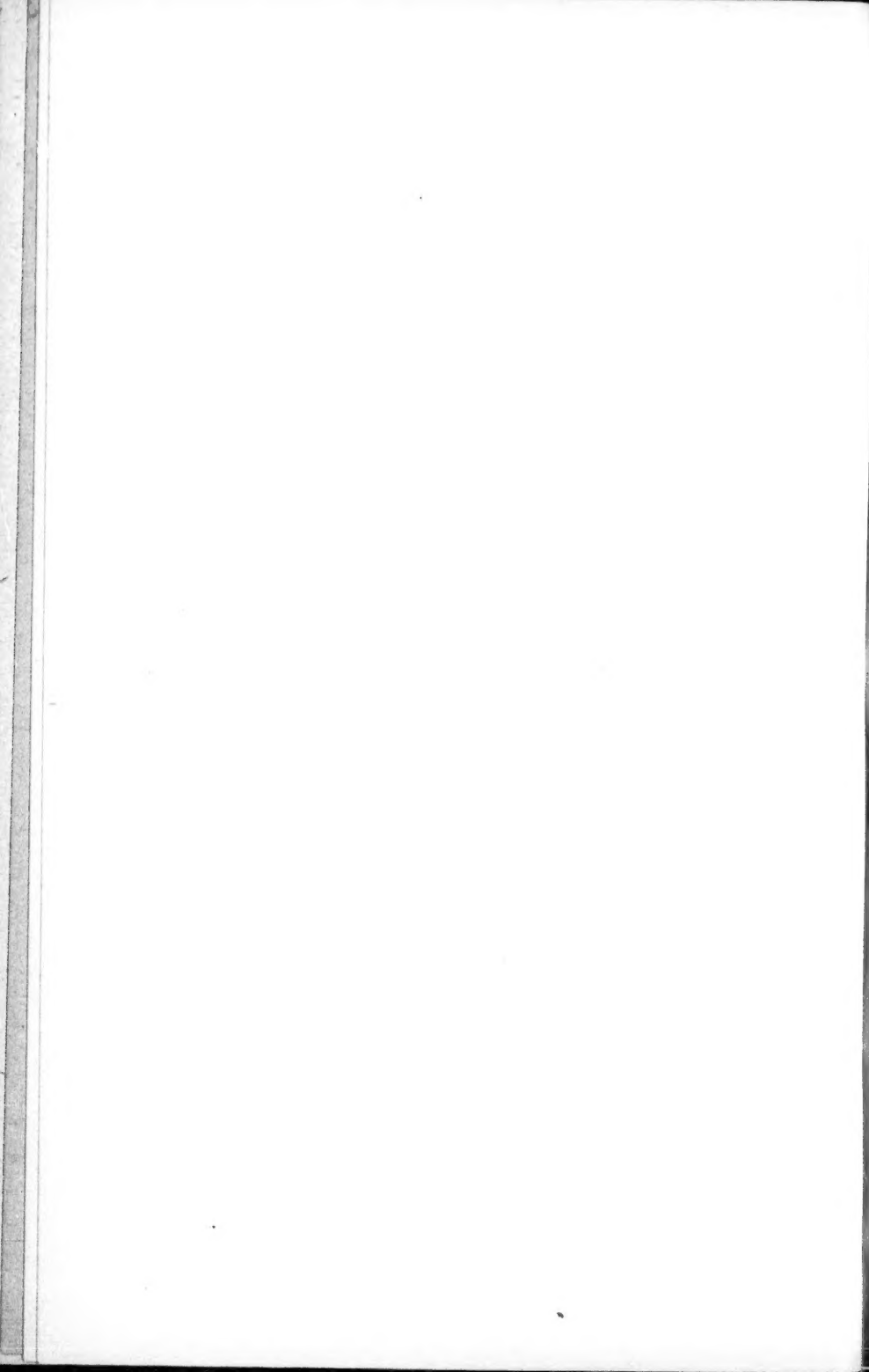


MONTREAL

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MONSABRÉ

Monsieur le Président, (1)

*Messieurs les membres du Cercle Ville-Marie,
Mesdames et Messieurs,*

Il m'a fallu pour accepter la gracieuse invitation de vous adresser la parole, ce soir, céder aux charmes d'un souvenir. Je vois revivre dans le cercle Ville-Marie, l'œuvre excellente du Cabinet de Lecture inaugurée par un des supérieurs de Saint-Sulpice les plus distingués, le Rév. Mr. Granet. Me rappelant ce que j'ai maintes fois vu et

(1) M. Ludger Montpetit, étudiant en médecine

entendu, ici, il me semble que les échos de cette enceinte me sollicitent, m'encouragent à apporter mon humble tribut d'efforts, de zèle, je dirai même d'admiration pour une association qui sera la joie de notre ville, l'embellissement de nos jeunes intelligences et la sauvegarde de la vertu. Pareille entreprise ne doit pas avoir à lutter contre l'indifférence, l'apathie ; il faut que chacun y mette la main suivant la mesure de ses forces ; et, je suis heureux de le constater, l'auditoire distingué que je contemple est une preuve que le cercle Ville-Marie a pour lui les sympathies de notre meilleure société canadienne.

Ces sympathies sont tout à fait précieuses. Ce sont autant de prix d'encouragement qui font honneur à l'institution qui les reçoit, car ils témoignent de la haute considération dont elle jouit. Mais, parmi ces nombreux prix d'encouragement dont vous

avez été honorés, il en est un dont je voudrais vous rappeler, en ce moment, l'aimable souvenir, à vous surtout MM. les membres du cercle Ville-Marie : celui qui vous a été décerné, l'an dernier, dans cette enceinte, par ce digne enfant de saint Dominique, dont la voix éloquente a laissé de si profondes impressions. Nous ne perdrons pas de si tôt le souvenir de ce régal littéraire.

Que voulait dire le célèbre dominicain en vous présentant le grand Lacordaire comme l'ami de la jeunesse ? si ce n'est que le bon Père Babonneau se montrait bien sincèrement le vôtre en épanchant pour ainsi dire l'âme de son maître dans vos âmes, en vous tenant suspendus à ses lèvres pour vous dire lui aussi son affection et son dévouement.

N'est-ce pas continuer en quelque sorte ce mémorable entretien que d'appeler, ce soir,

votre attention sur un autre enfant de saint Dominique, digne émule du grand Lacordaire—puisque ce dernier paraît ne pouvoir être surpassé—le Très Rév. Père Monsabré, considéré non pas dans l'ensemble de ses conférences de Notre-Dame, mais plus spécialement dans cette synthèse lumineuse qui forme le couronnement de son édifice de haut enseignement religieux ? Ce que je me propose de vous dire n'est qu'une modeste étude sur la manière originale et très exacte du grand prédicateur d'expliquer l'*amen*, dernier mot du symbole de notre foi.

I

Messieurs, il y a un tout petit mot qui conclut ou brise la paix entre les nations, frappe l'intelligence en lui rappelant les plus grandes choses, résume tout

un monde d'idées. En le prononçant, l'esprit du savant comme de l'ignorant s'humilie, se prosterne et se soumet : c'est l'obéissance et l'acquiescement de tout l'homme, l'abandon complet du cœur, sublime et généreux résumé de la foi et de l'adoration, le oui de l'intelligence—c'est l'*amen*.

“ Un jour, dit Lacordaire, le grand
“ poète anglais Pope, discutait avec un
“ jeune homme sur le sens d'un texte grec.
“ Après quelques hésitations, le jeune
“ homme, qui était un officier de l'armée
“ anglaise, dit au poète— : Il me semble
“ qu'en mettant un point d'interrogation à
“ la fin du texte, il deviendrait parfaitement
“ clair. Pope, mécontent qu'on l'eût pré-
“ venu en fait de sagacité littéraire répon-
“ dit — : Eh ! Monsieur l'officier, qu'est-ce
“ qu'un point d'interrogation ? L'officier,
“ regardant avec un sourire à demi respec-
“ tueux son illustre interlocuteur, qui n'avait

‘ pu perdre, dans la gloire, le malheur d’être
“ grandement contrefait, lui dit ingénieuse-
“ ment : — Le point d’interrogation est une
“ petite chose qui fait des questions.”

Ainsi en est-il de l’*Amen*.

Petite chose, en apparence, mais en réalité pleine de conséquences : il donne la réponse à toutes les questions ; et celui qui le prononce avec respect et conviction résume tout ce que Dieu demande de lui.

Le célèbre Monsabré ne peut descendre de la chaire de Notre-Dame, sans accorder à l’*amen* toute l’attention qu’il mérite. Après avoir parcouru pendant dix-sept ans devant un auditoire de plus en plus avide de sa parole, tous les articles du symbole de notre foi, il s’arrête devant ce mot qui résume à ses yeux toutes les vérités qu’il a si brillamment défendues, et il s’écrie :
“ Lorsque je vous ai introduits dans le
“ divin monument de la vérité qu’on appelle

“ le symbole de la foi chrétienne, le dogme
“ catholique, nous en avons admiré l'ensem-
“ ble. De cette vue générale, vous avez
“ reçu une impression de respect qui, pen-
“ dant 17 ans a soutenu votre religieuse
“ attention dans l'étude des détails du
“ sublime édifice de la parole de Dieu.
“ Faisons aujourd'hui comme les visiteurs
“ ravis qui, après avoir parcouru le temple
“ auguste où nous sommes assemblés, se
“ recueillent encore une fois sur le seuil
“ et résument, dans un profond et dernier
“ regard, toutes leurs impressions, et pré-
“ parons-nous à ce cri suprême de l'âme
“ vaincue par la splendeur et la force de
“ la vérité : *Amen !* ” — “ Ces vérités, lumi-
“ neuse manifestation de la science divine.
“ dominant tout, pénètrent tout, attirent
“ tout à elles, donnent à tout ce qui reçoit
“ leur empreinte, un caractère de grandeur
“ et de perfection qu'on ne peut obtenir de

“ la nature. Tout doit chercher en elles sa
“ consommation, tout doit leur dire :
“ *Amen ! — Amen* de l'intelligence, *amen* du
“ sens religieux, *amen* du sens esthétique.
“ *amen* de la vie morale, *amen* de la vie
“ sociale, *amen* de l'histoire humaine.” Tel
est le plan embrassé, poursuivi et admira-
blement rempli par l'illustre conférencier
dans ses six dernières conférences.

Ce qui frappe le plus, Messieurs, dans
ces pages que je vais essayer de vous faire
apprécier davantage, c'est cet ensemble de
vues d'une exacte et sûre pénétration qui
place l'orateur sacré comme à genoux
devant l'impérissable monument de notre
foi, lui en fait énumérer les beautés en un
féérique panorama, communique à son audi-
toire émerveillé, la pure et sincère excla-
mation de son âme sacrée : *Amen !* c'est
bien fait ! oui, réellement l'édifice
est somptueux, divin ! . . . Le dogme catho-

lique en est la base, l'adhésion de l'intelligence, bénie par Dieu dans sa foi, devient le foyer radieux qui illuminera son enceinte. Il y a dans ce palais habité par la Divinité, tant de pureté, tant d'enivrement, tant de transports sacrés, que la beauté la plus limpide y brille, l'harmonie y fait vibrer sa harpe d'or et l'inspiration y étale ses modes variés de séduction sainte. Quand une fois on y a pénétré, l'âme saisie d'admiration se sent plongée dans cette atmosphère qui lui convient, y refait ses forces avec les millions de forts qui communient avec elle, rentre dans la société pour y perpétuer la vie qu'elle y a puisée, ajoutant ensuite, page à page à l'histoire de son existence jusqu'à l'*amen* de l'éternité.

“ Le dogme catholique, dit l'orateur,
“ prévient les recherches de l'intelligence
“ humaine et l'affermir dans la possession
“ des vérités fondamentales dont elle ne

“ peut se passer et qu'elle peut connaître
“ par ses propres forces. Le dogme ca-
“ tholique grandit l'intelligence humaine,
“ en la transportant dans les régions supé-
“ rieures d'une science inaccessible à la na-
“ ture. Prévenue, affermie, grandie par le
“ dogme catholique, l'intelligence humaine
“ lui doit un assentiment, un *amen* qu'elle
“ ne peut lui refuser sans s'amoindrir et
“ sans déchoir.”

L'homme ouvrant les yeux à la lumière de la raison, considérant tout ce qui l'environne, pesant ses tendances, se sentant dominer par des inclinations, entraîner par les objets qui le captivent doit nécessairement se faire des questions. La matière ne lui fournira pas de réponse satisfaisante ; et son âme ne trouvera pas en elle-même un fonds inné de solutions aux grands problèmes qui l'embarrassent. Il se demande : Quelle est mon origine ? Que suis-je ? Quel

est le but de mon existence ? Plus il avancera en âge, plus la difficulté à répondre à ces questions croîtra ; et si son esprit se borne à observer seulement la terre, il s'aveuglera de plus en plus en dépit des flots de lumières jaillissant sur sa tête. Le dogme catholique vient ; il aide, il illumine, rassure, console et sauvegarde. Si un auteur célèbre a pu désigner notre sainte Eglise comme la meilleure école de respect qui soit au monde, ne peut-on pas ajouter, que c'est la plus merveilleuse institution de bon sens qui existe ? Sortez de ses rangs,—vous le pouvez, sans doute,—observez, et soyez sincères : vous verrez les sottes réponses qu'on vous donnera à toutes les questions qui, dans notre sens, se trouvent si heureusement élucidées. Que de beaux esprits, naguère l'admiration de tous, et aujourd'hui relégués dans l'ombre et abandonnés de leurs meilleurs amis ! C'est le balancier

de la fable qui les gênait ; ils l'ont rejeté :

..... Aussitôt fait que dit.

Le balancier jeté, notre étourdi chancèle ;
Il se cassa le nez et tout le monde en rit.

Ce qu'il y a de beau, Messieurs, c'est que ce procédé divin peut tout résoudre, s'adapte à toutes les intelligences, illumine les plus beaux comme les plus faibles esprits.

“ Il y a un petit livre, dit Jouffroy, qu'on
“ fait apprendre aux enfants, et sur lequel
“ on les interroge à l'église ; lisez ce petit
“ livre, vous y trouverez la solution de
“ toutes les questions posées par la philo-
“ sophie, de toutes sans exception. De-
“ mandez au jeune chrétien d'où vient
“ l'espèce humaine ? Où elle va ? Comment
“ elle va ? Demandez à cet enfant pour-
“ quoi il est ici-bas et ce qu'il deviendra
“ après sa mort ? Comment le monde a été

“ créé et à quelle fin ? Comment la terre à
“ été peuplée ? .. Origine de l'homme, ori-
“ gine de l'espèce, question des races, des-
“ tinée de l'homme en cette vie et en l'autre,
“ rapports de l'homme avec Dieu, devoirs
“ de l'homme envers ses semblables, cet
“ enfant n'ignore rien de tout cela. Voilà
“ ce que j'appelle une grande doctrine ;
“ je la reconnais à ce signe, qu'elle ne
“ laisse sans solution aucune des ques-
“ tions qui intéressent l'humanité.”

“ Mais, dit Monsabré, c'est un grand bien-
“ fait pour nous, Messieurs, d'être mis en
“ possession et affermis dans la connaissance
“ des vérités premières dont nous ne pou-
“ vons pas nous passer, par la voie courte
“ et directe d'une affirmation divine à
“ laquelle nous devons notre assentiment.
“ A ce bienfait se joint l'inestimable hon-
“ neur d'être transportés, par le dogme
“ catholique, dans les régions supérieures

“ d'une science inaccessible à la nature,
“ d'une science qui grandit l'intelligence à ce
“ point, que toutes les connaissances qu'elle
“ peut acquérir par ses propres forces sont
“ moindres, en comparaison des splendeurs
“ surnaturelles qui l'illuminent, que les
“ lumières d'emprunt, dont nous nous ser-
“ vons pour dissiper autour de nous les
“ ombres, en comparaison du soleil qui
“ inonde l'espace de ses rayons. ”

Comprenez bien, Messieurs, qu'il ne s'agit pas d'amoindrir ici la raison, de lui nier ses prérogatives, mais bien de l'ennoblir, de l'élever et de la grandir. Ah ! combien sont à plaindre ceux qui se refusent à nous suivre dans cette voie de gloire et de véritable prospérité!....

Je ne vous ennuierais pas, Messieurs, en étalant devant vous, leurs mesquines suggestions et leurs systèmes dégradants,

quand ils viennent philosopher sur Dieu, sur l'homme et sur le monde.

Mais pourquoi donc s'acharner à me montrer un dieu inférieur au mien, une religion qui m'offre moins d'avantages réels, qui me remplit de justes appréhensions, qui au lieu de m'affermir, me débilité, me trouble et me fait l'égal d'êtres sans raison ? Drôle de procédé que celui-là. Vous en savez, Messieurs, le secret. Il y a dans ces doctrines absurdes à nos yeux, comme un manteau qui recouvre plus d'une faiblesse, et si on voulait user de franchise, on prononcerait avec nous ce mot qui résume une foule de choses : la jouissance.

“ Je ne refuse pas, dit l'orateur, à la
raison et à l'expérience de m'éclairer ;
“ mais, emporté par une doctrine sublime
“ dans des régions supérieures où je vois
“ grandir tout ce que je veux connaître, je

“ ne puis m'empêcher de donner mon as-
“ sentiment au dogme qui me présente
“ un Dieu, une humanité, un monde plus
“ grands et plus beaux que je ne les puis
“ concevoir par les seules forces de mon
“ intelligence. Tout cela est trop grand
“ et trop beau pour n'être pas divin, trop
“ divin pour n'être pas vrai.”

Amen.—Il doit en être ainsi !....

II

L'homme est poussé par le besoin de connaître le vrai ; et le dogme catholique est le moyen le plus sûr, le plus logique, le plus consolant pour l'aider à accumuler ses connaissances, à les développer. Je dis : accumuler, parce qu'il s'en servira comme de degrés s'élevant de plus en plus jusqu'à ce que sa foi alimentée et bénie lui entr'ouvre les parvis célestes. Mais voici Dieu

qui apparaît ; je sens, je vois qu'il existe et tout me porte à chercher à le connaître.

“ Le plus sublime objet de la connaissance, le plus haut degré où elle puisse atteindre, le faite de toute les recherches humaines, c'est Dieu, dit saint Thomas. Or, l'homme ne se contente pas de connaître Dieu, explique Monsabré ; il veut avoir avec lui un commerce positif et efficace, mettre sa vie en rapport avec l'être souverain qui le tient sous sa dépendance, et qui, après lui avoir donné l'existence, peut lui communiquer encore de sa plénitude. En toute nature humaine, l'instinct intellectuel est accompagné de sens religieux, ou, si vous l'aimez mieux, de la *religiosité* : besoin et faculté de se mettre en rapport avec Dieu d'une manière positive et efficace.”

Il s'agit pour le conférencier de constater dans l'humanité l'existence du sens reli-

gieux, d'en étudier les exigences et les aspirations, et puis, en arriver à conclure victorieusement que ces exigences et ces aspirations ne peuvent être pleinement satisfaites que dans la direction donnée au sens religieux par le dogme catholique.

“ Quel est le peuple, quelle est la famille
“ humaine, dit Cicéron, qui, avant toute
“ science n'ait une connaissance anticipée
“ de la divinité ? ” Et Plutarque : “ Vous
“ pouvez trouver des villes privées de murailles, de maisons, de gymnases, de lois, . .
“ mais un peuple sans Dieu, sans prières,
“ sans serments, sans rites religieux, sans
“ sacrifices, nul n'en vit jamais. . Invoquons
“ Dieu pour l'heureux succès de notre législation ; qu'il daigne écouter nos prières, et
“ qu'il vienne, plein de bonté et de bienveillance, nous aider à établir notre ville
“ et nos lois.”

Voilà, Messieurs, l'aspiration d'un païen

qui s'exhale dans le lointain des âges, plus de 300 ans avant la régénération du monde par le divin Sauveur. Quel navrant contraste avec les utopies des pionniers de l'impiété moderne !.....

Ils s'acharnent à nier l'existence du sens religieux, le poursuivent à outrance, cherchant à le détruire dans l'âme de l'enfance, persuadés qu'il ne manquerait pas d'être enseveli dans les passions de la jeunesse pour apparaître au foyer domestique. Pour arriver plus sûrement à ce but inique, les gouvernants de France détachent le Christ des murs, déchirent les pages du catéchisme, violent le pacte sacré du Concordat et s'écrient par un de leurs partisans :

“ Nous sommes ici quelques-uns qui
“ n'avons pas besoin de prêtres.— Qu'est-
“ ce que j'en ferais ? Je suis de ceux qui
“ croient que l'homme qui se respecte,
“ arrivé à un certain âge, ne doit jamais

“ s’agenouiller devant un roi, ni devant un
“ prêtre, qu’il doit pour l’honneur de l’hu-
“ manité rester debout ” — C’est bien là l’ab-
sence du sens religieux. Heureusement,
Messieurs, — je m’empresse de le dire — à
côté de ces impies, la France a encore assez
de forts qui s’inclinent dans la sincérité de
leurs adorations pour pouvoir par la ferveur
de la prière et par le martyre, s’il le faut,
purifier et sauver la patrie.

Du moment qu’on ne voit en celui qui
commande ou en celui qui sacrifie qu’une
figure humaine, pourquoi fléchir le genou,
ou courber la tête ? Mais, pour nous, heu-
reux mortels, le sens divin éclaire nos
esprits, échauffe nos cœurs et provoque en
nous les sentiments les plus salutaires.
Nous saluons et bénissons dans le bras qui
commande, la volonté divine qui nous
dirige ; l’encens qui s’échappe des mains de
nos sacrificateurs symbolise la sincérité de

nos prières ; nous adorons sur nos autels une victime divine, dont le sang continue à vivifier toute la nation ; nous tenons à nos croyances et nous voulons vivre et mourir dans la foi, l'espérance et la charité.

Ces sentiments, Messieurs, ne sont pas seulement basés sur des habitudes, ils ne sont pas seulement le résultat de la réflexion et de l'expérience ; ils prennent leur origine dans un besoin, dans une tendance de l'âme. Comme un enfant, avant de pouvoir se raisonner la chose, s'attache au cou de sa mère chérie parce que c'est sa mère, ainsi l'homme s'affaisse devant la divinité parce qu'il a besoin d'elle. “ L'homme vivant, “ dit Monsabré, veut mettre sa vie en rapport avec la vie ”—Comment en effet demander la vie à ce qui l'entourne ? Il voit sans cesse tout tomber autour de lui. La plante croît, s'épanouit et se dessèche. Les constructions les plus solides viennent

à s'effondrer devant le vent et la tempête. Mais qui donc a créé et conduit ces éléments qui se coalisent et qu'aucune force humaine ne peut enchaîner ? J'ai vu des remparts qui me paraissaient infranchissables, et ils ont été détruits ; les villes se sont peuplées et ont été réduites en cendre ; toute puissance terrestre est ébranlée et le conquérant comme l'artisan viennent bientôt mêler leurs cendres dans le champ des morts. Il faut qu'il y ait un être infini en grandeur et en majesté qui commande à tout cela, et qui coordonne tout : c'est le sens religieux qui parle :—“ L'homme religieux, dit l'orateur de Notre-Dame, veut
“ un Dieu qui s'occupe de lui et mette à
“ son service sa toute-puissance ; un Dieu
“ qui écoute ses prières, un Dieu qu'on
“ n'appelle pas en vain au secours des faibles et des misères humaines ; un Dieu
“ qu'on invoque efficacement dans la peine ;

“ un Dieu qui bénisse les efforts et les
“ fruits du travail ; un Dieu qui délivre de
“ la douleur et console les souffrants ; un
“ Dieu qu'on puisse appeler le Dieu très
“ bon aussi bien que le Dieu très grand,
“ *Deo optimo maximo*.—L'homme religieux
“ aspire à des rapprochements qui mettent
“ Dieu, non seulement à la portée de son
“ âme, mais à la portée de ses sens..
“ L'homme religieux tremble devant la jus-
“ tice de son Dieu..L'homme religieux
“ aspire à rendre ses actes dignes du Dieu
“ qu'il honore et qu'il implore..L'homme
“ religieux a besoin de signes sensibles et
“ sanctifiés qui témoignent de son désir
“ d'unir sa vie à la vie de Dieu, et qui s'ils
“ ne peuvent le grandir, soient au moins la
“ livrée de sa religieuse dépendance..
“ L'homme religieux compte sur un Dieu
“ rémunérateur qui le récompensera de ses
“ mérites.”

Voilà, Messieurs, des exigences religieuses qu'il n'est pas permis de nier, qu'il faut entourer de respect. Qu'elles soient le fruit d'un patrimoine que l'humanité se passe de génération en génération ou les produits spontanés de la nature, peu importe : la chose existe. Il y a là un besoin, une demande urgente, et le dogme catholique y répond à souhait. Ici, l'illustre conférencier passe en revue les principales sectes qui ont essayé d'y répondre. Je dois vous épargner ces détails pour mettre sous vos yeux la solution de ce grand problème. "Le dogme catholique, dit l'orateur, n'oublie rien de ce qui peut convenir à la religieuse nature de l'homme. Le sens religieux veut se mettre en rapport avec Dieu. Le dogme catholique lui montre dans les cieux l'infini réel et vivant, un Dieu maître des maîtres, roi des rois, bon comme un père qui ne veut que le

« bien de ses enfants, écoute leurs prières
« et pour les exaucer, offre à ceux qui l'im-
« plorent les services de sa toute puissance »
C'est bien ! Amen.

Et puis, dans une éloquente énuméra-
tion de nos croyances et de nos pratiques
religieuses, l'orateur en arrive à la conclu-
sion que « le dogme catholique nous affirme,
« nous promet et nous assure l'éternelle
« vision, l'éternelle possession, l'éternelle
« jouissance de Dieu dans l'âme et dans la
« chair revivifiée. *Amen ! C'est bien !*

III

L'homme est en possession de la vérité.
Après l'avoir recherchée avec persévérance
et bonne foi, il l'accueille au jour de joie ou
d'affliction de sa vie : c'est le dogme catho-
lique qui la lui présente fraîche, radieuse
et intarissable ; toutes les aspirations de

son âme sont assouvies. Il regarde, il contemple, et, à l'aspect de toutes ces beautés qui lui apparaissent, à mesure que la main de Dieu lève avec bonté le rideau devant ses yeux, il se sent transporté d'admiration, d'un saint enthousiasme ; il veut parler, il chante—c'est le sens esthétique qui exerce son influence et auquel il ne doit pas résister. Ce sentiment du beau nous touche, nous émeut et nous fait admirer. Le dogme catholique doit nous suivre, nous accompagner dans nos relations avec ce sentiment, afin qu'il n'y ait pas de malheureuse ambiguïté, que rien ne soit détourné de la gloire de Dieu, que l'élévation constante résulte de la beauté du spectacle et que l'idéal divin soit comme la boussole de la conservation et du salut..... Plaçant toujours son auditeur en face du monument de notre foi, notre illustre conférencier ne néglige rien pour en faire ressortir la beauté divine ;

et épris lui-même de ses charmes, il utilise les merveilleuses ressources de son éloquence pour communiquer aux autres son saint enthousiasme.

“ Dans cet ensemble, dit-il, toutes les
“ lignes sont pures d'une pureté admirable.
“ Ni l'infini n'est ravalé, si bas qu'il des-
“ cende, ni l'infini n'est surfait, si haut qu'il
“ monte ; ni l'un ni l'autre ne sont con-
“ fondus, si intime que soit leur union. On
“ les distingue toujours sans qu'on puisse
“ les séparer. Tout se tient, tout est en
“ ordre, tout concourt à l'harmonieuse
“ beauté de ce monument intellectuel.
“ Les dogmes se groupent autour du dogme
“ central de l'incarnation, dans lequel nous
“ apparaît Celui par qui et pour qui tout a
“ été fait. Les proportions sont si bien
“ gardées que ce qui appartient à la nature
“ semble s'élever au-dessus d'elle, et ce
“ qui s'élève au-dessus de la nature semble

“ lui appartenir. La nature supporte tout
“ le surnaturel, le surnaturel explique toute
“ la nature. On voit mieux, on comprend
“ mieux toutes choses, quand on les re-
“ garde dans l'ordre admirable de cette
“ doctrine sainte. Non, la raison humaine
“ n'est pour rien dans cette gigantesque
“ construction de vérités. Le progrès et
“ les soudures des dogmes nous révèle-
“ raient sa touche ; l'inégalité d'âge attes-
“ terait la longueur et la difficulté du labeur ;
“ l'incohésion des parties accuserait l'im-
“ perfection de l'ouvrier. Le dogme ca-
“ tholique est d'une seule venue ; on y
“ reconnaît l'œuvre de celui qui est des-
“ cendu du ciel, et qui, témoin incorrupti-
“ ble a raconté à la terre ce qu'il voyait et
“ entendait depuis l'éternité, dans l'essence
“ divine. ”

La doctrine catholique, Messieurs, révèle
le vrai et unique principe du beau. Une

fois ce principe établi et prouvé aux yeux de l'humanité, elle nous montre combien il nous touche de près, s'incorpore à nous, s'accapare notre esprit, remplit nos cœurs de satisfaisantes manifestations auxquelles on ne peut résister. L'âme une fois captée, ravie, transportée sous le souffle divin, c'est pour elle un besoin comme irrésistible d'essayer à reproduire au dehors ce que Dieu inspire au dedans ; de là ces créatures artistiques, qui, dans différents genres subjuguent tantôt les yeux en les fixant malgré vous au ciel, tantôt la voix en lui faisant vibrer la harpe humaine comme la lyre d'or des anges, et ne vous laissent encore sur terre que pour devenir meilleurs. En lisant les admirables pages de Monsabré, on ne saurait lui être trop reconnaissant de les avoir léguées à l'humanité, surtout quand on songe aux notions qui président au développement de l'art moderne. Il

faut d'après ses belles pensées, que la beauté soit comme l'émanation de la Divinité. Aussi rejette-t-il avec mépris cette parole de Taine : " Quand pour la première fois on découvre la vie réelle et que, pénétrant dans sa structure, on comprend le mécanisme admirable de ses parties, cette contemplation suffit, on ne désire rien au delà."

" Je veux davantage, dit Monsabré et avec l'artiste de génie, Michel-Ange, je m'écrie : Déployant ses ailes pour s'élever vers les cieux, d'où elle est descendue, l'âme ne s'arrête pas à la beauté qui séduit les yeux et qui est aussi fragile que trompeuse ; mais elle cherche dans son vol sublime à atteindre le principe du beau universel."

Ce principe du beau : c'est Dieu ; et plus l'être divin se montre à nous par cet heureux et fidèle commerce, plus les manifes-

tations d'intimité qui en résultent font naître les émotions qui transportent et les accents d'admiration qui produisent ; mais, pour que l'effet soit divin comme la cause d'où il résulte est divine, il faut que le lien soit pur et dépouillé de tout alliage terrestre. C'est l'idée que développe admirablement le Père Félix dans sa conférence sur l'objet et la nature de l'art :

“ Si votre cœur demeuré sensible et pur,
“ au moins d'une pureté relative, ne sait
“ s'éprendre d'une chaste passion pour les
“ beautés immaculées qui passent, sous vos
“ yeux, dans le double domaine de l'art et
“ de la nature ; si vous n'avez devant elles,
“ au feu du regard des anges et du cœur
“ des séraphins, dans leur béatifique face à
“ face avec l'éternelle beauté, ou plutôt, si
“ ange et séraphin vous-même, parcourant
“ ici-bas toute la hiérarchie des beautés
“ qu'on peut voir sur la terre, vous ne mon-

“ te zde degré en degré l'échelle éclatante
“ qui vous élève de la contemplation des
“ beautés terrestres à la contemplation de
“ la céleste beauté ; si d'image en image
“ vous ne vous élevez jusqu'à leur arché-
“ type éternel ; si votre contemplation de la
“ beauté réelle n'est assez affranchie des
“ servitudes de la matière, pour vous empor-
“ ter sur un souffle sublime jusqu'à la con-
“ templation de la beauté idéale ; en un mot,
“ si votre génie, porté sur les deux ailes
“ d'une contemplation plus haute et d'un
“ amour plus céleste, ne prend son vol pour
“ monter jusqu'à l'idéal lui-même, qui réside
“ en Dieu et qui est Dieu même, jamais,
“ oh ! non, jamais, malgré l'habileté de vos
“ méthodes et la perfection de vos procédés,
“ vous n'atteindrez le point culminant de
“ la création artistique, parce que vous ne
“ mettrez jamais dans vos œuvres un reflet
“ de cette divine beauté par laquelle toutes

“ les choses sont belles, et sans laquelle
“ rien de beau ni dans la nature, ni dans
“ l'art ne saurait exister.”

Je dépasserais, Messieurs, les limites que je dois m'assigner, ce soir, en entrant dans tous les détails d'analyse. Il faut nécessairement me borner à certains passages plus frappants : “ Le Christ est beau aux yeux
“ qui le contemplent comme à l'esprit qui
“ le médite. Il se montre, c'est la divine
“ beauté qui nous apparaît : il habite parmi
“ nous, c'est la divine beauté qui s'est faite
“ notre hôte ; il parle, c'est la divine beauté
“ qui nous instruit, nous apprend les secrets
“ du ciel et reluit en sa sublime et profonde
“ parole. Il commande à la nature et fait
“ des miracles, c'est la divine beauté, prin-
“ cipe et type de tous les êtres, de leurs
“ formes et de leurs lois, qui prouve à la
“ fois sa présence et son souverain pouvoir.
“ Il pleure, c'est la divine beauté qui s'at-

“ tendrit sur nos misères avant de les gué-
“ rir ; il nous aime, il nous accable de
“ bienfaits, il se livre à la justice du ciel, il
“ souffre, il meurt pour nous, c'est la divine
“ beauté qui veut nous ravir par le plus
“ grand charme de l'amour, le sacrifice. Il
“ triomphe de la mort, c'est la divine beauté
“ qui nous montre le chemin de gloire que
“ nous prendrons un jour pour aller la
“ rejoindre au lieu d'où elle est descendue.
“ Oh ! oui, Jésus était beau aux yeux de
“ ceux qui eurent le bonheur de le contem-
“ pler et de chanter *hosanna* sur son pas-
“ sage.....”

Suit l'entraînante description de la copie
la plus parfaite de la beauté divine qui
apparaît sur la terre ; permettez que je
mette sous vos yeux ce tableau de la
Vierge. Il ne peut que réjouir les cœurs
des habitants de Ville-Marie :

“ C'est une femme, semblable par la

“ nature à toutes les filles de l'homme, mais
“ douée de grâces si extraordinaires et de
“ privilèges si admirables qu'elle efface par
“ sa beauté naturelle toutes les beautés de
“ la nature. Jamais aucune souillure n'a
“ flétri ni son corps ni son âme sainte. Elle
“ est pure, de la plus grande pureté qui se
“ puisse concevoir après celle de Dieu.
“ Réparée par une grâce sans exemple, elle
“ unit en sa personne deux honneurs incon-
“ ciliables, la virginité et la maternité. Con-
“ trairement à la loi, l'honneur maternel
“ ne détruit point en elle l'intégrité virgi-
“ nale ; et l'intégrité virginale rehausse
“ l'honneur maternel d'un éclat que lui
“ refuse la nature. Elle est mère d'autant
“ plus admirable qu'elle est vierge, et vierge
“ d'autant plus étonnante qu'elle est mère. ”

Passant de ce type original à d'autres secondaires, l'orateur sacré s'arrête devant la figure des saints.

Les saints ont trouvé le moyen efficace de leur assimilation à la ravissante beauté divine, dans la Sainte-Eucharistie qui en est le foyer. L'institution eucharistique fait descendre le ciel sur la terre, et devient si chère aux adorations humaines que les basiliques, les cathédrales, les temples surgissent de tous côtés, élevant leurs majestueuses proportions vers la nue, symbolisant les mystères les plus profonds et attirant l'admiration des plus fiers impies. Le silence de leurs enceintes sacrées comme les chants qui y résonnent, les fresques qui les décorent comme les marbres qui y siègent, les dorures et les parements qui y scintillent, tout célèbre, proclame la majesté, la sainteté de l'Etre des êtres, et son incomparable beauté.

IV

A toutes les questions primordiales même secondaires que l'intelligence humaine doit et peut se poser, le dogme catholique apporte une réponse satisfaisante en tous points ; et si parfois la raison vient se heurter contre le mystère, elle reconnaît en cela la limite qui lui est imposée et qu'elle ne peut franchir, sans se rendre coupable de l'orgueilleuse prétention de porter atteinte à l'éminence de Dieu. Sortie des mains divines, elle est portée instinctivement vers lui ; de là cette forme religieuse qui lui apparaît comme toute naturelle et que le dogme catholique revêt d'une pureté et d'une inviolabilité qui défient les plus terribles obstacles. Présenté au monde avec ses signes et ses garanties,

le dogme catholique obtient à travers tous les temps l'adhésion des âmes sincères : c'est l'*amen* de l'intelligence. Il nourrit et satisfait les aspirations de tous les cœurs en leur donnant un mode de commerce certain et des plus consolants avec la Divinité : c'est l'*amen* du sens religieux. Mais il faut aussi un élément à cette autre tendance de l'homme qui l'élève si haut au-dessus de terre, qui satisfait son admiration et sème la joie dans sa vie : c'est l'*amen* du sens esthétique.

L'homme, Messieurs, ne doit pas être simplement un croyant, un admirateur de la divinité, il lui faut retracer dans les détails de sa vie ce qu'il croit et ce qu'il admire ; de là la nécessité de bien diriger le sens moral au moyen de cette étonnante faculté qu'il possède de vouloir faire le bien et de le faire librement. Ici, le dogme catholique viendra à son aide plus sûre-

ment que toute autre croyance, et, après avoir jeté un regard sur tout ce qui l'environne, choisissant librement, il agira noblement, et sa vie tout entière redira son *amen* de foi pratique et d'adhésion constante à la volonté divine.

Le dogme catholique établit mieux que toute autre doctrine les solides fondements de la vie morale. “ Il nous enseigne, dit “ Montsabré, comme vérité première, l’existence d’un Dieu Créateur et Providence “ de tous les êtres. L’acte généreux et libre “ par lequel il produit lui donne sur les “ fruits de sa paternité tous les droits d’un “ maître absolu Il les tient sous sa souveraine dépendance, donne à chacun sa mesure d’être et de perfection, et à tous la “ règle de leurs actes et de leurs rapports. “ Cette règle c’est la loi : loi éternelle, “ immuable et sainte, ordonnant tout en “ lui-même avant de descendre aux rivages

“ de la création.. Et l'on voudrait que
“ l'homme fut soustrait à toute loi divine.
“ Cela ne peut pas être, Messieurs. Par-
“ ticipant mieux que toutes les créatures
“ à la nature de Dieu, l'homme doit, mieux
“ que toutes les créatures, reproduire les
“ mœurs et les perfections de son auteur,
“ et il ne le peut qu'en recevant pour règle
“ de sa vie morale, comme de sa vie intel-
“ lectuelle, la loi divine d'une manière plus
“ excellente : Ainsi parle saint Thomas.”

Et quelle est, Messieurs, cette manière plus excellente de recevoir la loi divine ? —c'est de chercher à la connaître et à l'accomplir librement. Pour cela chacun possède un tribunal qui est la conscience.
“ La conscience ! voilà, dit Monsabré, la
“ première loi de Dieu, promulguée par le
“ fait même de son insertion au livre incor-
“ ruptible de notre âme.”

Les rationalistes, Messieurs, prétendent

que cette loi suffit. Sans aucun doute, ce serait assez, s'il n'y avait aucun danger, aucune influence extérieure, aucune tendance malheureuse pour la pervertir. Le dogme catholique vient aider sa faiblesse, augmenter sa force. Il met devant nos yeux ce qu'il faut faire, ce qu'il faut éviter, Ici, se trouve une admirable page que je ne puis passer sous silence.

“ C'était au désert : le peuple hébreu
“ attendait impatiemment Moïse que le
“ Seigneur avait appelé ; le tonnerre gron-
“ dait, les éclairs fendaient la nuit : ombre,
“ le Sinaï abreuvé de gloire chancelait
“ comme un homme ivre, les échos de la
“ solitude étaient pleins de bruits mysté-
“ rieux, et la plume ardente des chérubins
“ traçait sur des tables de pierre les com-
“ mandements de Jéhovah. Ces commande-
“ ments étaient un tableau où la conscience
“ pouvait se lire tout entière. Adorer

“ Dieu, n’avoir point d’autre maître suprême
“ que lui, l’aimer, respecter son nom sacré,
“ s’appliquer au culte de sa majesté sainte.
“ honorer les chefs de famille, être juste et
“ chaste en ses actions et ses désirs, véridique en ses paroles,—la conscience avait
“ dit toutes ces choses ; mais il importait
“ que, troublée par les sens et les passions,
“ elle les entendît venir du dehors, afin de
“ prévenir le mortel assoupissement qui
“ menaçait le genre humain.

“ Mais cette manifestation sublime, était
“ pourtant insuffisante, puisqu’elle n’attei-
“ gnait qu’un peuple privilégié. Le dogme
“ catholique nous montre non plus Moïse,
“ mais la réalisation du vœu qu’exprimait le
“ prophète quand il s’écriait :—“ Etablissez,
“ Seigneur, un législateur sur les peuples,
“ afin qu’ils sachent qu’ils sont hommes.—
“ Ce législateur est venu, c’est le Verbe
“ fait chair ” — dont soit dit en passant —

vous avez salué la naissance, cette année surtout, avec un redoublement de joie et de ferveur, à l'ombre de ces tours majestueuses, dans l'enceinte de ce temple si richement décoré, dont Montréal a lieu d'être fier, et qui, au lieu de vieillir, reçoit chaque année avec ses offices grandioses, ses flots d'harmonie et ses jets féériques de lumières, le gage assuré d'une intarissable jeunesse.

Jésus-Christ vient donc au monde pour guider la conscience humaine, pour la soutenir dans sa faiblesse par sa loi, et en établir par sa sanction divine la perpétuelle observance. Pour cela les moyens sont légués sûrement ; et, comme il ne s'agit pas pour l'homme de se borner à la terre, mais de tendre plus haut, d'atteindre le surnaturel, le règne de la grâce est établi. L'administration du nouveau royaume est confiée à un corps pur, saint, infaillible, indépen-

dant de l'erreur, pouvant la braver, la terrasser au besoin. Si donc, l'homme dans sa vie agitée se sent faiblir, il n'a qu'à redresser la tête, regarder avec confiance, user des moyens que Dieu lui assure pour refaire ses forces. Il peut se dire en toute sûreté : si je ne fais pas cela, je suis perdu pour toujours, où, si j'agis de telle façon, je me moque de la douleur comme des plaisirs, je passerai à travers la souffrance, la mort même, j'arriverai à la joie éternelle — *scio cui credidi*, je sais en qui j'ai foi.

Vraiment, s'il n'y a pas là le moyen de devenir meilleur, de panser les plaies de l'âme, de les guérir et de brider les mauvais penchants, où trouver mieux ? — Remarquez, Messieurs, il n'y a pas là une simple question de principes ; il est facile de nous placer en face de faits et même d'en appeler à une expérience personnelle ; la fontaine de force est sous nos yeux, nous

y avons puisé la vie de nos âmes. La vraie loi nous a été léguée avec les moyens de l'observer, moyens efficaces, à la portée de tous, abordables aux intelligences bornées comme aux talents les plus brillants. Nous n'avons qu'à ouvrir la première page de l'histoire d'un pays où la civilisation chrétienne a pénétré, et nous verrons sur-le-champ les prodiges qu'ils ont opérés.

“ Pour rendre l'homme humble, chaste,
“ apôtre, frère, dit le grand Lacordaire, la
“ doctrine catholique a pris son point
“ d'appui en dehors de lui-même, elle l'a
“ pris en Dieu. C'est au nom de Dieu,
“ par la force des rapports qu'elle a créés
“ entre lui et nous, par l'efficacité de ses
“ dogmes, de son culte et de ses sacrements,
“ qu'elle change en nous ce cadavre rebelle
“ à la vertu, qu'elle le ranime, le ressuscite,
“ le purifie, le transforme, le revêt de la
“ gloire du Thabor, et que l'ayant ainsi

“ armé de pied en cap, elle le jette comme
“ un homme nouveau dans la mêlée du
“ monde, faible encore par sa nature, mais
“ fortifié par Dieu vers qui monte son in-
“ cessante inspiration.”

V

Le dogme catholique obtient de l'intelligence la plus parfaite adhésion, de l'âme l'admiration, du cœur l'amour et la générosité, non pas seulement dans une certaine mesure, mais même poussés jusqu'à l'héroïsme. *L'amen* de ses fidèles adhérents est donc complet, c'est dire par là même l'influence salubre exercée sur toute la société. Ainsi en face des bienfaits innombrables qui découlent pour elle de l'accomplissement de la loi chrétienne, l'orateur de Notre-Dame veut en étudier les obligations. La société est un corps composé

d'organes nombreux et distincts ; pour que le bonheur, la paix et la prospérité y règnent, il faut l'accomplissement de deux grands devoirs : le respect et l'amour—et pour ceux qui commandent et pour ceux qui obéissent. Or, le dogme catholique est par excellence la doctrine du respect et de l'amour. donc les sociétés doivent lui accorder avec empressement l'*amen* de leur acquiescement, afin de participer aux avantages inestimables qu'il apporte à l'humanité. Mais, Messieurs, le respect et l'amour ne s'accordent pas sans raisons. Ce sont des sentiments trop nobles, trop profonds pour ne pas être motivés : “ C'est à la tête
“ de la société, c'est-à-dire, au pouvoir qui
“ gouverne, dit Monsabré, qu'est dû le premier
“ hommage du respect ; et vous com-
“ prenez tout de suite que cet hommage
“ est en raison de l'idée que nous avons de
“ la dignité de ce pouvoir.”

Le dogme catholique nous met devant les yeux l'origine, et partant ce qui fait la force et ce qui assure le légitime fonctionnement du pouvoir. Toujours Dieu en tête de tout, toujours le foyer des vraies lumières et des saintes inspirations en tout. Le divin soleil de justice lance un de ses rayons sur le front de celui qui est appelé à gouverner, ce n'est pas d'en bas qu'il reçoit le pouvoir, c'est de Dieu de qui vient toute puissance : c'est comme un épanouissement de la grâce divine qui jette sur des épaules humaines le manteau de la vraie royauté. A cette vue les croyants courbent le front, se soumettent, respectent le sceptre comme les édits qu'il confirme ; et de même qu'en vue des types divins et des représentations religieuses, ils chantent l'*amen* du cantique de louange et du ravissement, de même devant la figure auguste de celui qui commande au nom de Dieu, ils volent, ils cou-

rent, ils combattent et ils s'estiment heureux de mourir. Je ne m'inspire pas ici, Messieurs, simplement des idées qui ont heureusement prévalu, en certains temps, en certains lieux ; je n'examine pas les personnes, je ne pèse pas même leurs actes, mais je dis que la religion qui m'a accueilli en naissant, qui secourt nos faiblesses et qui a droit à notre suprême soumission, nous montre sur un trône quelque chose de plus que de l'or et de la pourpre. C'est Dieu qui fait les grands, c'est Dieu qui les ennoblit, et c'est pour cela qu'il faut respecter, aimer et servir celui qui commande en son nom.— ' Croyez, dit Monsabré, qu'une nation peut se choisir des chefs, quand Dieu ne lui en donne pas ; qu'elle peut déterminer la forme et les conditions d'un gouvernement. Appelez cela, si vous le voulez, la souveraineté nationale. Mais, sans préjudice de cette souveraineté nationale, on doit dire avec un savant ju-

riste : “ L’opération sociale a son principe dans l’autorité ; ” et, avec le docte Bellarmin : “ le pouvoir vient radicalement de Dieu seul ; car, étant annexé à la nature de l’homme, il procède de celui qui a fait la nature de l’homme. Le droit de nature étant droit divin, il faut conclure que le pouvoir est introduit dans l’humanité par droit divin.”

Avec cette notion maintenue chez un peuple, il nous est facile d’en toucher les résultats chez celui qui commande comme chez ceux qui obéissent, non seulement dans les rapports des organes du corps avec la tête, mais aussi des sujets entre eux. Le respect devient le modèle de tous : c’est comme une sève douce et forte qui circule dans toutes les artères du grand arbre social, qui le nourrit et perpétue sa vigueur. Mais, dit-on, la société offre des inégalités ; ne vaudrait il pas mieux tout aplanir et pré-

senter un niveau parfait, sans distinction ? Que de gens de nos jours prétendent qu'on y gagnerait énormément ! Comme c'est facile à dire, Messieurs, et combien il est aisé de voir que ces prétendus niveleurs de l'état social font comme l'artisan qui se place généralement à bonne hauteur pour façonner la pièce de bois qu'il travaille ! Il reste des morceaux, qu'en feront-ils ? Pensez-vous que ce sera pour donner du pain, des habits à ceux qui pour le moment les applaudissent ? vous ne le croyez pas ; moi non plus. Il vaut mieux dire avec Monsabré : “ Impossible de supprimer ces iné-
“ galités et ces contrastes ; ils sont dus à des
“ causes indestructibles qui persistent
“ comme le monde et se renouvellent com-
“ me les congrégations. Les forces de la
“ nature, le talent, le caractère, le tempé-
“ rament, les passions, et par dessus tout la
“ liberté humaine combinée avec les autres

“ énergies de l'âme et mise en présence des
“ influences extérieures, n'est-ce pas assez
“ pour faire qu'il y ait dans une société des
“ grands et des petits, des puissants et des
“ faibles, des glorieux et des obscurs, des
“ riches et des pauvres ? Ces inégalités et
“ ces contrastes entrent dans l'arrangement
“ des choses, dans l'ordre universel voulu
“ de Dieu et maintenu par la Providence.
“ Nous ne supprimerons pas, Messieurs, les
“ inégalités et les contrastes sociaux, mais
“ il est un moyen de les tempérer, de les
“ rendre supportables, de les faire concourir
“ à l'unité et à la beauté de l'ordre voulu
“ par la Providence ; ce moyen c'est la cir-
“ culation du respect dans la vie sociale.”
Le respect n'est pas suffisant. Il est vrai
qu'une fois le principe de l'autorité admis,
popularisé il en résulte tant de bien-être,
tant de confort, qu'on arrive à développer
l'attachement ; mais le dogme catholique

veut aller plus loin, et c'est ce qui fait dire à l'orateur de Notre-Dame : " La charité ne
" germe, ne s'épanouit et ne fructifie que
" dans le rayonnement des vérités sublimes
" que nous révèle le dogme catholique. Il
" nous en montre le type éternel dans la vie
" divine elle-même, le législateur et le mo-
" dèle dans notre propre nature, la source
" et le but surnaturel, et nous provoque
" ainsi à des œuvres d'amour et de dévoue-
" ment qui combler les vides, suppriment
" les distances, atténuent la rudesse des
" contrastes de la vie commune et font con-
" courir toutes les saintes énergies au rap-
" prochement, à la fusion intime et cordiale
" de tous les membres du corps social."

Mais, me direz-vous, est-ce bien possible ?
Oui, quand on le veut ; mais quand on ne
cherche qu'à monter aux dépens des autres,
quand on veut s'arroger le droit de tout
saper, de tout détruire, quand on entend

l'ordre social de telle façon que personne ne soit maître de son champ, ni de son avoir, fruit de ses sueurs, ni même de sa personne, tout cela au nom de la liberté, de la fraternité, au lieu d'avoir le respect, l'amour, ---on sème partout les haines, les désolations et la révolte. "Aussi, dit Monsabré, n'est-ce " pas sur la nature qu'il faut compter pour " nous aimer les uns les autres, comme le " Christ nous a aimés, mais sur la grâce " dont le dogme catholique nous montre les " divines sources."

VI

Nous venons de voir successivement, Messieurs, que le grand orateur de Notre-Dame a mis le dogme catholique en rapport avec les besoins de l'intelligence, avec les aspirations du sens religieux qu'il satisfait, avec le sens esthétique qu'il rehausse, avec

la vie morale qu'il dirige aussi haut qu'elle peut monter, avec la vie sociale dont il assure le bonheur et la paix par le respect et l'amour. Il ne restait plus qu'à ouvrir les pages de l'histoire et à constater quel rôle ce fameux dogme catholique a réellement joué afin d'obtenir un dernier acquiescement, l'*amen* de l'approbation des siècles, du fait accompli. Ce sujet a recueilli les derniers accents de l'illustre conférencier.

“ Dans cette lumière vivante, dit-il, que
“ projette notre divine doctrine sur les
“ temps anciens et nouveaux, parcourons
“ rapidement l'histoire de l'humanité et de-
“ mandons-lui son *amen*.”

Plus l'esprit cherche à sonder la profondeur des temps reculés, plus il s'égare quand il ne suit pas les données du dogme catholique. On a cherché de toutes manières à amener un conflit entre sa doctrine et les découvertes de la science moderne ; mais

si l'on veut être de bonne foi, on verra qu'on n'a pas réussi.—“ Nous avons contrôlé, dit le savant abbé Vigouroux, au moyen des monuments authentiques des bords de l'Euphrate et du Tigre, ainsi que des monuments des bords du Nil, tous les détails que nous lisons dans nos saints Livres, même les plus minutieux, ceux qui ne sont donnés qu'en passant sous forme d'allusion, et pour ainsi dire, sans que l'auteur lui-même s'en soit aperçu, et toutes les fois que le contrôle a été possible, l'assyriologie et l'égyptologie nous ont répondu : La Bible a dit la vérité. Notre-Seigneur Jésus-Christ nous l'avait promis : Si les hommes se taisent, les pierres prendront une voix et réclameront en faveur de la vérité. Qu'il en soit béni à jamais.”

L'orateur de Notre-Dame part du principe que toute l'histoire humaine est dans l'ineffable mystère de l'incarnation, s'ap-

puyant sur les paroles de St-Paul : " le Verbe, image du Dieu invisible est, selon les desseins éternels, le premier né de toute créature parce qu'en son incarnation la sagesse divine voit l'unité de tous. A ce titre, il lui appartient d'être le fondement même de l'univers. Dans le ciel et sur la terre, les choses visibles et invisibles, les principautés et les puissances, tout est établi sur lui. Tout est créé par lui, tout s'appuie, tout repose sur lui, tout se tient en lui, parce qu'il a plû à Dieu de lui donner toute plénitude."

Voilà donc Jésus-Christ sur qui tout repose, vers qui tout converge, et dont la venue promise et attendue éclaire tous les siècles, d'une lumière qu'aucune impiété n'a jamais pu amoindrir.

" Cette humanité, dit Monsabré, c'est Jésus-Christ qui l'a créée, non pas rudimentaire et sauvage, mais belle, innocente, pure, heureuse, à l'image et à la ressemblance de

son auteur, ouverte par l'intelligence aux illuminations de la sagesse divine, maîtresse par sa volonté de tous les appétits, remplie de grâce, faisant admirer dans la virginale beauté de son corps, le double épanouissement de la vie divine et d'une nature parfaite, investie d'un souverain empire sur les créatures qui subissent le charme de sa présence, de son regard, de sa voix, dédoublée en quelque sorte dans un couple ravissant, dont le plus pur et le plus parfait des amours fait l'union d'où doivent sortir d'innombrables générations."

Ici, l'orateur prévient l'objection qui peut s'élever de l'auditoire au sujet de l'unité de race.

—“ Comment pouvez vous affirmer que cette multitude de peuples, différents de couleur, de physionomie, de langage, puisse descendre de ce même couple adamique que proclame votre dogme ? ”

Quelle étrange chose, soit dit en passant, que cet acharnement de certains fameux esprits de vouloir ternir dans sa source, la beauté, la noblesse de notre provenance, et n'offrir en échange que des suppositions ridicules et des systèmes dégradants !

“ Cherchez mieux, dit Monsabré, et en cherchant mieux on découvre que, dans la diversité des types, la nature humaine est partout semblable à elle-même quant à sa conformation générale, ses aptitudes et ses tendances ; que les ressemblances fondamentales, qui indiquent si clairement une seule et même nature dans l'humanité, doivent peser d'un plus grand poids sur nos jugements, que des différences superficielles, infiniment plus nombreuses et plus accusées chez d'autres espèces animales ; que la physionomie et la coloration sont des phénomènes locaux purement accidentels, et à peu près insignifiants pour la détermination

de l'espèce. . En cherchant mieux on s'explique cet ensemble de traditions qui fait remonter notre origine à un couple unique et l'on se convainc que le dogme catholique projette sur les commencements de l'histoire humaine un rayon de vérité."

Suivent les descriptions de la chute de l'homme et des malheureuses conséquences qui en résultèrent ; c'est alors que la promesse du divin libérateur est faite. " Dans " le rayon révélateur, dit Monsabré, où le " dogme catholique nous montre la chute de " l'homme, il nous montre le Rédempteur ; " c'est à ce titre que le Verbe de Dieu entre " dans notre histoire."

Ici, l'orateur pose cette objection : mais puisque la promesse du Rédempteur était déjà faite et assurée, pourquoi, attendre si longtemps après son accomplissement ?

Le dogme catholique nous apprend qu'il fallait cette épreuve à notre orgueil, afin de

prouver de la façon la plus évidente l'impossibilité où était le monde de se refaire par lui-même ; et, puis-je ajouter, malgré ce long essai de forces humaines. en dépit de ces barbaries entassées les unes sur les autres, de ces cataclysmes, avertissements sanglants et prophétiques, même après que les temps de la régénération ont sonné leur heure de miséricorde, n'y en a-t-il pas encore un grand nombre qui ont des yeux et qui ne voient pas, des oreilles et qui n'entendent pas ? Témoin, ce petit peuple choisi par Dieu, élevé, nourri plus spécialement par lui, et qui, suivant l'admirable expression de Monsabré—" est le mystérieux courant dans lequel les desseins de la Providence s'acheminent dans leur accomplissement." C'est ce peuple qui a été le dépositaire de ses promesses, c'est lui qui nous a transmis les saintes Lettres. On y lisait clairement le temps, le lieu, le mode de la

naissance du Rédempteur, et cependant les Juifs affectent encore d'attendre, — et combien, Messieurs, vont encore plus loin — celui qu'on vous a promis. disent-ils, n'est qu'un mythe ; vous êtes illusionnés !...

— “ Rassurez-vous, dit Monsabré, nous avons une longue suite d'oracles qui s'accumulent et se soudent l'un à l'autre, et dont le plus jeune précède de quatre cents ans le libérateur annoncé. Près des oracles marchent les figures. Bref, tout dans la vie d'Israël parle de l'avenir, figure l'avenir, et dessine l'admirable plan de Dieu résument l'histoire humaine dans son Verbe incarné.”

Les prédictions ont été faites, Messieurs, elles ont été conservées, les figures sont venues tour à tour prévenir à leur manière l'accomplissement du plan divin, et l'on peut dire que les excès, les crimes et les débauches des grands comme des petits, ont

fait voir le monde comme un vaste océan d'iniquité sur lequel le vrai Maître devait apparaître pour apaiser la tempête, ramener le calme et indiquer le port du salut. C'est le fait providentiel des temps nouveaux ; et ici, ce n'est plus l'âge lointain, mais l'agglomération de tant de preuves, de tant de merveilles, le déplacement de tant de saintes énergies que l'histoire tombe à genoux, si je puis m'exprimer ainsi, et proclame son acquiescement. *Amen !* Oui, c'est bien fait !

Je ne vous retiendrai pas, Messieurs, pour passer du dogme catholique en dépit des hommes et des choses ; une seule parole me suffit : --- le dogme catholique existe, donc il est divin. “ Il y a, dit l'orateur de Notre-Dame, aujourd'hui un monde chrétien où le progrès moral s'élève à cette perfection transcendante que nous avons appelée la sainteté, fleur réservée des terres

fécondes où germent et se développent les nobles et pieuses habitudes de l'âme humaine poussées par une culture intensive jusqu'à l'héroïsme."

L'existence de ce fait, Messieurs, suffit pour prouver qu'il a son origine dans les cieux. Oui, notre sainte religion est un mot qui opère ce qu'il dit. C'est un lien qui part de la main toute puissante de Dieu. Il est jeté sur la terre, il attire, il attache, il perpétue sa force, et l'impiété moderne cherche en vain un glaive pour le rompre. Le fer n'est pas assez dur, l'acier n'est pas assez trempé, et les mains humaines qui s'en servent pour enlacer les cœurs et les volontés, n'étant parfois que celles d'un vieillard, ne lâcheront jamais. "Le Christ, aujourd'hui, hier et dans tous les siècles, s'écrie Monsabré avec saint Paul. J'aime à voir de cette hauteur, les générations et les événements qui ont rempli et

rempliront les siècles jusqu'à la consommation des temps ; je suis heureux d'entendre sortir de tous les lieux, de tous les temps, de toutes les générations, de tous les peuples, de tous les événements de l'histoire humaine ce cri de solennel acquiescement : cela doit être, qu'il en soit ainsi ! — *Amen* ! C'est bien !... Voilà mon dernier mot dit l'orateur sacré."

Qu'il me soit permis, Messieurs, d'en ajouter un autre.

Si le monde entier, depuis son origine jusqu'à nos jours, déroule à nos yeux émerveillés l'accomplissement du plan divin ; si les aspirations de l'esprit, de l'âme, du cœur des peuples, comme des individus témoignent tour à tour de leur adhésion et de leur acquiescement par un *amen* généreux et constant, je puis dire que notre pays, en particulier, garde dans son histoire, dans ses dévouements et dans sa foi une adhésion,

un *amen* peut-être plus pur, plus saint que toute autre contrée. Ville-Marie, surtout, peut lever la tête avec une juste fierté. " C'est sans doute, disait dernièrement l'éminent curé de Notre-Dame, grâce à la protection de Marie et à leur foi si vive, que les Canadiens ont surmonté les épreuves et les périls. Il faut donc conserver toujours notre piété et notre foi pour être dignes de notre destinée." Pour cela rien de plus utile que de stimuler notre ardeur au spectacle des hautes vertus de nos pères. Il faut le dire, les dévouements, l'héroïsme de l'illustre fondateur de notre cité ne sont pas suffisamment connus. Depuis trop longtemps le touriste descend sur nos rives sans avoir l'heureuse occasion de saluer, sur une de nos plus belles places publiques, la noble figure de Paul de Chomédy, sieur de Maisonneuve. Espérons que pareil désappointement touche à son

terme. En tout cas, nous devons féliciter le séminaire de Saint-Sulpice qui a si généreusement assisté notre jeunesse et favorisé les progrès de notre beau Canada, d'avoir érigé, au pays de l'histoire, un monument impérissable non moins digne d'un fils de Jean-Jacques Olier que du premier gouverneur de Ville-Marie. Échangeant sa belle patrie de France contre les forêts et les arpents de neige de l'île que nous habitons, notre héros s'était d'abord arrêté à Québec. M. de Montmagny animé sans doute d'excellentes intentions, cherche à le dissuader de remonter plus haut le Saint-Laurent. Une assemblée est convoquée, et M. de Maisonneuve de se lever et de s'écrier :— " Je ne suis pas venu pour délibérer, mais bien pour exécuter. Tous les arbres de l'île de Montréal seraient-ils changés en autant d'Iroquois, il n'en est pas moins de mon devoir et de mon honneur

d'aller y établir une colonie." Messieurs, dites et faites de même. Nous n'avons pas à délibérer, c'est-à-dire à mettre en question les principes de notre foi, il faut exécuter, mettre en pratique la foi de notre sainte Eglise, la foi de nos aïeux, la foi de nos mères si chrétiennes.

Entendez-vous cet acquiescement complet et généreux de la patrie ? Cet *amen* est tellement identifié au sol, à la famille, à la nation qu'il faut bien reconnaître que le grain de sénevé a été jeté dans cette terre canadienne par le divin père de famille. Il a poussé, il a grandi ; et l'arbre gigantesque et majestueux qu'il forme vous abrite et vous protège.

Puissiez-vous, Messieurs du cercle Ville-Marie, toujours comprendre la noblesse de votre mission qui est d'aider les plus saintes énergies ! Recevez, au nom de cet auditoire distingué, les vœux que nous formons

tous pour l'heureux développement de votre belle institution dont les succès vont toujours grandissants : c'est l'*amen* national.

Montréal, Cercle Ville-Marie, 3 février 1891.

The result of the cosmo-theistic method is of very great importance, and it enables us to posit intelligence of the first cause. This is important in itself, but it has also its value in relation to the arguments from *order* and from *design*. As the ætio-theistic method justified the postulate of a first cause of the totality of the phenomena of the universe, so the cosmo-theistic method enables us to assert that this cause must have certain features in order to meet the demands of our rational nature as expressed by the principle of sufficient reason.



CHAPTER IV.

THE EUTAXIO-THEISTIC METHOD.

This method rests on the principle of order, and is capable of extensive illustration from the phenomena of the universe. Opinions differ in regard to its precise scope and import. Some writers look upon it as the typical form of the cosmological proof of the existence of God. Others include under it some of the main factors of teleology. McCosh is an example of the former, and Flint of the latter mode of viewing the eutaxio-theistic argument. It may conduce to clearness of exposition, if we keep the various lines of theistic proof distinctly apart till we see the precise import of each. In order to this end it must be observed that the ætio-theistic method rests directly on the principle of causality, the cosmotheistic on the principle of sufficient reason, the eutaxio-theistic on the principle of order, and the teleo-theistic on the principle of end, adaptation or design.

The method before us in this chapter rests its inference directly on the order which admittedly prevails everywhere in the universe. This order is extensive and all-pervading. H. B. Smith and Flint include under its far-reaching sweep the facts of order found in the world of nature, of mind, and of morals. Many other writers confine the inference of this method to the physical or natural world. While we may admit that the facts of the moral sphere are marked

by features of order, yet is perhaps better to deal with these facts by themselves under the ethico-theistic method, inasmuch as there are elements connected with them which do not pertain to physical nature.

In marking out the scope of this method, a distinction noticed by many writers on this topic needs to be observed. This distinction is between what has been called *general*, and what is known as *special* order. General order refers to the sequences and uniformities observable throughout the whole realm of nature. Special order relates to particular cases where things seem to be adapted for each other. Though this distinction was hinted at by the older natural theologians, yet McCosh was really the first in modern times who clearly pointed it out. In his work entitled "The Typical Forms and Special Ends in Creation," he distinguishes very distinctly between what is general and what is special in the order of the universe. The "typical form" is general order, and the "special end" is special order. The mathematical relations in a crystal, and the general motions of the heavenly bodies are examples of general order. The adaptation of the eye to the purpose of vision, and the relation of the lungs in animals to the atmosphere are cases of special order. Flint lays but little stress on this distinction, and scarcely does more than recognize that there is ground for it. It would, perhaps, have been better if Flint had followed McCosh more closely on this point. Flint's discussion is certainly more confused than it would have been had he paid more attention to the difference between the facts of general and of special order. Moreover, he loses much argumentative power in presenting the proof in the form he does. Diman not only marks out this distinction very fairly, but he also carries it with him in his exposition. Hicks also emphasises the difference between general and special order, though his decidedly polemical attitude towards the ordinary teleological proofs renders his discussion less useful than Diman's. It need only be added that we regard this distinc-

tion to be a real and important one. General order is the proper field of the eutaxio-theistic method ; special order belongs to the teleo-theistic proof, and will come before us in next chapter. At present, therefore, we have to deal with the facts of order in the universe in general.

In setting forth the scope of this method further, another important question arises. This question has reference to the relation of the principle of causality to the inference of the eutaxio-theistic method. In regard to this question there is much diversity of opinion. Does the validity of the inference of this method depend on the principle of causality? Is its conclusion sound apart from any particular theory of causation? It was hinted in the discussion of the ætio-theistic method that the principle of causality, on which the inference of that method is founded, was also indirectly related to all the other methods of theistic proof. This point now requires further explanation. Hume and Reid, who differ on almost every other question in philosophy, agree in resting the argument from order on the principle of causation. Though they do not agree as to the nature of the causal relation in general, yet they regard the argument from order as merely a form of the causal proof. McCosh and many other writers on natural theology hold the same opinion. This is also substantially Flint's position, though it is to be observed that he uses the word *cause* in a very wide sense. Kant's criticism of the cosmological argument assumes that the validity of the inference from the facts of order involves the principle of causality. It is of no small moment, therefore, to secure a well balanced position on this question, for it may be that holding such a position will enable us to turn the edge of Kant's destructive criticism.

To clear up the way here will be of service not only to the method under discussion, but also for the teleo-theistic method. It will enable us to understand the relation of the argument from order, and of the design argument as well, to the principle of caus-

lity. Is the relation the same as in the case of the causal argument proper? We are inclined to the view that it is different. Then how is the eutaxio-theistic proof related to causation? Using causation in the sense of efficient cause, it is only the ætio-theistic method that depends absolutely upon it for the validity of its inference. If there be no efficient cause, there can be no argument for a first cause. Neither the eutaxio-theistic nor the teleo-theistic proofs depend absolutely upon the principle of causality. The dependence is only indirect, and all that we require to maintain is merely the reality of invariable sequence, in order to vindicate the inference of the argument from order. Invariable sequence will not, however, serve for the basis of the ætio-theistic inference. In the case of the causal argument proper, it is the *nature* of the connection between cause and effect, as involving efficiency, that is prominent. In regard to the argument from order, it is merely the *invariableness* of the connection that is needed to justify the inference. Hence, objections based on a denial of efficient causation do not necessarily invalidate the arguments from order, or from design. Thus the criticisms made by Kant, and by Mill, cannot be so effective as is supposed. We do not forget, however, that, having established the reality of efficient cause in the chapter on the causal argument, it will place the discussion of this chapter on even more secure ground to carry with us that idea of cause. We conclude, therefore, that the inference of the argument from order is only indirectly related to the principle of causality, and that the eutaxio-theistic method is valid if merely invariable sequence or general order is admitted.

In unfolding this method we cannot at any length outline the facts of order with which it deals. To give a mere sketch would be to survey all the sciences, and transcribe many a page from many a treatise on natural theology. As we look at nature we observe, amid all her changes, that there is order, system, everywhere. Scientific research is only expanding the range of our

vision in the field of order. We note a few typical instances of general order. The law of gravitation in relation to the regular movements of the heavenly bodies, all that is implied in Newton's laws of motion, the facts connected with chemical affinity as these may be expressed in the terms of mathematics, the wonderful geometrical relations found in crystalline substances, the phenomena of light as illustrated in the colors of the rainbow, the mysteries of sound as revealed in the oratorio, the regular return of day and night and the constant recurrence of the seasons, the orderly successions of plants after their kind and of animals according to their species, the various types which run all through both the animal and vegetable kingdoms, and the uniformities observable in the mental operations of man, are types of ten thousand times ten thousand instances of order which might be mentioned in setting forth this method of Theism. This wonderful order has been the theme of poet and philosopher, of naturalist and theologian in all ages; and never before has the vision reached so far, or the observing eye peered so deeply into this remarkable realm as at the present day.

In making our survey of the field of order we may notice a two-fold feature running through it. There are *unities* and there are *laws* in the phenomena of order. Each of these supplies a distinct form of this argument. The former may be termed the *typo*-theistic phase of the method under consideration, and the latter the *nomo*-theistic. A sentence or two will mark out the subject matter of each.

Typo-theism includes the facts involved in the general types under which many facts having certain resemblances may be unified. The facts brought out in the science of comparative anatomy, and those unities in the animal and vegetable world which render the classification of the various species possible, are examples of this phase of order. The question here is, whence came these unities? How are these types to be accounted for?

Nomo-theism will include all the phenomena of order denoted by the so-called laws of nature. We cannot enter into a full discussion as to what these natural laws, of which so many accounts have been given, really are. They are not to be regarded as having any measure of efficiency in themselves, nor as being entities of any kind. They are merely expressions of certain sequences or uniformities in nature. They do not constitute the facts of order, nor do they control them. They are simply convenient methods of describing what we actually observe in the universe. The laws of gravitation, of motion, of chemical combination, of crystalization, of the seasons, and so on, do not produce the facts with which they are severally concerned, but they simply describe certain features in these facts. The problem here is, whence came these laws? How are we to account for these uniformities?

The facts of order being admitted, the question next is: What is the proper explanation of this order? How comes it to be and to continue? There are at least three alternatives here. The first is that of chance and fate. The second is based on a certain dynamical conception in reference to the constitution of matter which has been given by modern science. The third alternative is that order implies intelligence, and that we are justified in inferring mind from the facts of order.

The first of these alternatives need not be very seriously considered. As presented in either ancient or modern times it is at best but a very unlikely hypothesis. Whether we take the doctrine of the fortuitous concourse of atoms, or the theory of the necessary endless series as proposed explanations of order, we find the demands of reason far from satisfied. It is worthy of remark that modern scientific research has completely exploded the doctrines of Democritus, Epicurus and Lucretius, in regard to the way in which the universe, with all its facts of order, came into existence. In regard to chance and fate, it is to be carefully observed that they cannot really account for anything. They are not agents but

mere process. A process can neither cause nor explain itself. Chance and fate are at most merely words used to describe the particular modes in which certain events are supposed to occur. If we regard them as agents, then we are logically led on to posit intelligence. These hypotheses are supposed to have dispensed with intelligence, yet they really involve an agency which is nothing apart from intelligence. In the case of chance we have intelligence working in an arbitrary manner, in that of fate intelligence acts necessarily. We reject this alternative as absurd and contradictory.

The second alternative brings before us some difficult questions. These questions are concerned with certain modern dynamical theories in regard to the constitution and potency of matter. These theories are presented in various ways. Matter and force are assumed. The former in some state is held to be eternal, the latter amid all its modifications is persistent. Physicus and Spencer may be taken as typical advocates of this alternative. The reasoning on this point is so profound that it is not possible to set it forth clearly in the space at our command. A purely mechanical theory of the universe is not necessarily atheistic, but the dynamical theory may give us merely an *anima mundi*, or land us in a materialistic pantheism. In the mechanical theory, so long as mind is not reduced to matter, but allowed its own independent existence, the theistic inference from the facts of order is possible. The dynamical theory, while in many respects it is a grander conception of the universe, is at the same time exceedingly dangerous to the argument from order. If it be assumed that matter possesses or is endowed with the germs of all that appears in the universe, then life and mind, order and adaptation, are to be explained as the natural outcome of matter. When Physicus seeks to show that mind has its origin in matter he really destroys the theistic argument, for if the human mind be denied the reality of the divine mind cannot be defended. The materialistic monism of Spencer

virtually renders the proof of the divine existence impossible ; and it at the same time makes the existence of God useless. The question still recurs, however, in all forms of the dynamical theory of matter, whence came this force which is persistent and how did matter come to be, and to be crowned with the promise and potency of all things. Spencer excludes God by the very assumptions of his theory, and yet he is compelled to leave unexplained certain things of which human reason urgently demands a solution, other than that which agnosticism supplies. Admitting the truth of the dynamical theory as a well attested scientific hypothesis, we may still ask for an explanation of the orderly laws or sequences observable in the facts of order, which this theory or hypothesis exhibits. This alternative is also rejected as defective.

We adopt the third alternative, and maintain that the proper inference from the facts of order in the universe is that there is intelligence or mind related to the world of order. We see marks of order on every hand, and posit mind as the proper explanation of it. This is the kernel of the argument of this method. That order implies intelligence, we take to be a well grounded induction from the facts of order. The analogy with things under the control of man comes in to illustrate the inference, though the reasoning is not simply analogical in its nature. Having refuted the other two possible alternatives, it is only necessary to state the form of the eutaxio-theistic method in the briefest way. It is as follows : Order implies intelligence or mind ; the universe possesses marks of order ; therefore the universe implies intelligence or mind. We infer the reality of mind holding a certain relation to the universe from the phenomena of order manifest in the universe. We do not infer an infinite mind or intelligence, but only such an intelligence as the facts of order demand in order to satisfy human reason. We do not pretend to prove a personal God as the result of this method, but we simply assert the reality of mind as a proper inference from the facts which form the basis

of this inference. Those objections which condemn this method because it does not prove an infinite personal God have therefore no place. We cannot blame the method for not doing what it neither promises nor undertakes. This method brings us to an important stage in the vindication of our belief in the existence of God, wherein we find ourselves justified in inferring intelligence as the explanation of the order observed in the universe. The value of this conclusion is very great at the present day, when such efforts are made to banish intelligence or mind from the universe, as we find made by some of the advocates of the positive philosophy. The facts of order are universally admitted, for no one thinks that the universe is a chaos. The question is whether the order can be accounted for without intelligence. If we can justify the postulate of intelligence, as this method enables us to do, then we can pass from the material to the spiritual, from the non-mental to mind. This is an important gain in favor of Theism.



CHAPTER V.

THE TELEO-THEISTIC METHOD.

This method bids us enter the wide domain of what has generally been regarded as the sphere of natural theology proper. It invites us to consider what is sometimes called the *design* argument, and sometimes the argument from *final cause*. It is, perhaps, the most venerable of all the proofs of the divine existence. It has certainly been the most fully illustrated by a great host of writers in all ages. It is the only argument which is formally stated in the Scriptures, and its influence on the minds of ordinary men has been greater than that of any of the other theistic proofs. Even Kant, while whetting his sword against it, admits that it is an argument not altogether to be despised. This method is at least as old as Socrates, though some writers are inclined to regard Anaxagoras as its father. Plato in the *Timæus* very clearly unfolded it, and Aristotle set it forth as distinctly as Paley. In the middle ages we find Sebonde presenting it when most of the Schoolmen were busy with onto-theism. In modern times, after the manner of Nieuwentyt and Paley, we have a host of writers heaping up illustrations from all sources in support of the inference of this method. For a time it was almost the only proof that theologians relied on in support of Theism. A host of critics have also arisen against the design argument and it has been subjected to severe scrutiny. The result of this criticism, when not irrational or illogical, has been good ; for

it must be admitted that many writers on natural theology a hundred years ago were more eloquent than logical. They sought to prove an infinite personal God at a single leap, instead of being content to move on step by step in the line of the various theistic proofs to the desired conclusion. Criticism has also helped to confine this argument to its proper sphere, and its proof has been made all the more effective in that sphere during recent years. We shall divide our discussion of it into two sections. In the first we shall indicate the scope of the argument, and in the second we shall consider objections to it. Since the most vigorous attacks made upon Theism at the present day are directed against the teleo-theistic method, these attacks demand careful consideration.

SECTION I.

THE SCOPE OF THE TELEO-THEISTIC METHOD.

This method is popularly known as the *design* argument, but the term design seems to be open to the objection that it assumes the main thing to be proved. The reality of design or intention as implying intelligence is the matter to be proved. To assume design at the outset is really to beg the question. The fact of design must first be established ; then from that fact we may make the theistic inference. It must, therefore, be shown that there are those facts in nature which indicate the existence of an intelligence which adapts means to secure foreseen ends. The term *final* cause is also used to designate this method. Janet makes this term the title of his able and exhaustive treatise on this argument. Final cause is to be carefully distinguished from efficient cause, which is the principle of the ætio-theistic method. Efficient cause points to that which brings anything about. Final cause denotes the purpose for which anything exists. According to this view there is

observed in nature certain adaptations of means to ends. There is what looks like a plan made beforehand, and then nature seems to be working up to that plan. An ideal future is presented, and then means come into operation to realize this ideal future. All this, it is maintained, justifies the inference that intelligence stands related in some way to these facts of foreseen plan or ideal future.

In regard to the precise logical form of this method an important question arises. Is it entirely *a-posteriori*, or is there also an *a-priori* element in it? Is it merely inductive in its form, or does its inference rest on an intuitive basis? Is the principle of design an intuition, or is it a generalization from experience? Are final and efficient cause the same in their nature? Here opinions differ widely. Reid, Porter and others hold that final cause is intuitive. Mill, Janet and many others maintain that it is inductive. The expositor given in last chapter, regarding the relation of the eutaxio-theistic and teleo-theistic methods to the principle of causality, leads to the conclusion that final cause is not an intuitive principle, and that the inference of the teleo-theistic method is inductive in its form. Finality is a law of nature rather than a principle of reason. We do not *think* it into nature as a category, but we *find* it in nature as a fact. It should be carefully observed that the inductive process in this method has for its special function the establishment of the premises of the argument. When the premises are confirmed, then a simple deductive process leads to the theistic conclusion. In this conclusion we only analytically unfold what is already contained in the premises. Hence, the vindication of the premises by valid induction is the real task for this method.

Further, in regard to the logical form of the proof, we need to understand whether the proof is of the nature of mere analogy. Analogy is the resemblance of relations between different things. In the theistic controversy the method now under discussion has often been regarded as merely analogical in its nature. The force of the proof has been made to turn on the resemblance between

marks of design perceived in works of human skill and similar marks observed in nature. It is in this connection that the weakness of Paley's argument appears. Perhaps Janet in the first part of his masterly treatise tends a little in the same direction. Kant evidently had the element of analogy prominent when he penned his elaborate criticism. While we admit that analogy aids us in illustrating this method, yet we do not think that analogy is the main principle of its inference. Those who present this argument in the form of analogy compare the industry of nature with that of man. They argue that, since any human mechanism such as a watch is the product of intelligence, so in like manner a natural organism such as the eye must also be the result of intelligence.

A little reflection will show that we cannot pass logically from human mechanism to nature's mechanism. It will be observed that in reaching intelligence we make precisely the same inference in both cases, only in one case the relation of intelligence to the mechanism is more clearly seen than in the other. From marks of adaptation in the watch we infer that it is the product of intelligence, and from similar marks in the eye we infer that it also is the result of intelligence. So far as logical validity is concerned, it is as proper to reason from the eye to the watch as from the watch to the eye. We infer intelligence properly in both cases, but each inference is logically independent of the other. The mechanism of the watch may *illustrate*, but it cannot *prove*, that nature's adaptations imply intelligence. We make these remarks not to weaken the force of the teleo-theistic proof, but rather to fortify it against certain objections which are based on the supposition that it is simply analogical in form. We incline strongly to the opinion that the argument now under review is strictly inductive in its principle, and at the same time capable of ample illustration by means of analogy. As inductive, it postulates the hypothesis of intelligence as the only adequate solution of the facts of adaptation observed in nature.

In regard to the subject matter of this method, it need only be remarked that this consists in all the facts of *special* order alluded to in last chapter, and there distinguished from the facts of *general* order. We have now before us what McCosh calls "special ends," and what others describe as features of adaptation, plan, purpose, intention or design. To sketch these facts or features at length is not our purpose in this essay. Only a few typical illustrations may be given, and for the rest we must refer to the ordinary works on natural theology. There are adaptations in particular organs, as in the eye and hand of man, in the wings of birds, in the trunk of the elephant, and in the webbed feet of certain waterfowl. Then there are adaptations of certain organs to each other, as in the case of the heart and lungs in animals, of the pollen in male and female plants, and of the teeth and digestive organs in carnivorous animals respectively. Then, again, there are adaptations of organs to the functions they perform, as is seen in the case of the feet for walking, of fins for swimming, and of the heart for the circulation of the blood. Then, further, we observe adaptations of the organism to its environment, as in the case of birds to the atmosphere, of fishes to the water, and of the heavy fur of the white bear to the polar regions. Then, we might mention the adaptation of parts to the whole, and the evident plan and purpose running through the whole realm of nature on the earth and in the heavens, as composing part of the subject matter of this argument. The phenomena of animal instinct is generally included in the material of this method, but we think it better to deal with its facts under the method of sufficient reason, as we have already done in dealing with the cosmo-theistic method.

We may now state this method in its syllogistic form and indicate its precise import. The syllogism is as follows:—Major premise: The adaptation of means to foreseen ends or results implies intelligence. Minor: The special order of nature presents such adaptation. Conclusion: This order of nature implies intel-

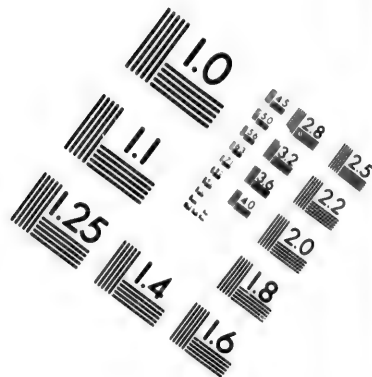
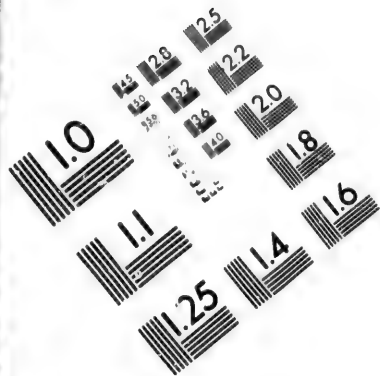
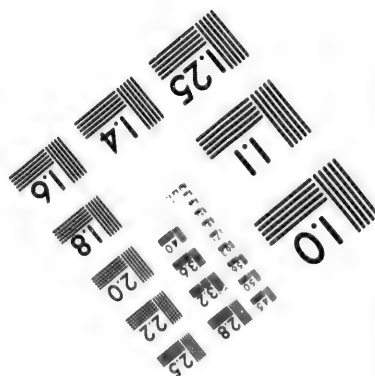
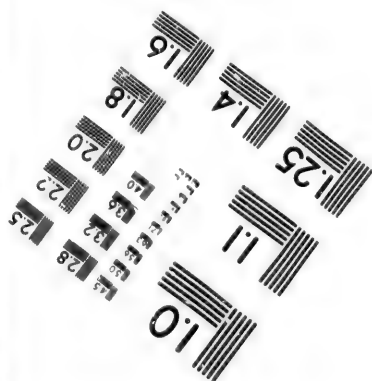
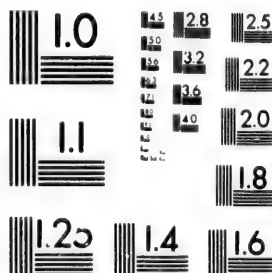


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ligence. If these premises are well grounded the conclusion is valid. In former times the minor premise was questioned, but at the present day the major is more frequently disputed.

At the present day the assertion made in the minor premise involves but little difficulty. It is very generally admitted that nature contains numberless adaptations of means to ends, and marvellous adjustments of parts to parts. This premise simply states the fact that finality exists in nature, but it does not raise the question of the ground or cause of that finality. Only those, perhaps, who hold that nature is the product of the fortuitous concourse of atoms will deny the minor.

It is when we turn to the major premise that we face the real difficulties in the teleo-theistic method. Many modern writers who admit the minor deny the major. The real question here is: How can we pass logically from finality to intelligence, from adaptation to mind? How are we to go out beyond nature to find an adequate explanation of the finality admitted to be in nature? Or, do we need to go beyond nature at all for the explanation? Is the finality not immanent in nature; or may it not be merely subjective and regulative of our thinking? It will at once be seen how profound the problem raised by the assertion of the major premise really is, and we must be careful not to assume its truth without examination. We can only in the very briefest way indicate the path along which the inductive process leads us in establishing the validity of this premise. The problem is to furnish a proper explanation of adaptation and finality. We try different hypothesis in order to get this explanation. Mere mechanism will not suffice, for it can never provide adjustment, adaptation, finality. Nor, again, can an adequate explanation be found in vital processes, or instinctive tendencies, for these simply work from within, and cannot adjust means to ends from without. Hence we must rise above mechanism and instinct, above matter and life, to obtain the solution of finality. We must posit intelligence, working con-

sciously, adapting means to ends, and adjusting parts to parts, as the proper explanation of finality. The only finality of which we have any knowledge is that of a purposing mind ; and since finality with us implies intentionality, we conclude that the inference from the finality in nature to intelligence or purposing mind is a strictly valid induction.

It only remains to exhibit the content of the conclusion of this proof. The conclusion is that nature involves intelligence or purposing mind, and we must be careful not to put more into this conclusion than the premises warrant. In the first place, it is frankly admitted that this method by itself does not prove the existence of a *Creator*. Creation is one thing, and finality is another ; and it is no objection to the argument from final cause to say that it does not prove a creator, when it does not undertake that task. The teleo-theistic method simply vindicates the inference of an intelligence other than and above nature, as the proper explanation of the facts of special order which involve the principle of finality. In the second place, this method does not give us an *infinite* intelligence, or an infinite personal God. The facts are finite, and do not absolutely require an infinite intelligence to explain them. If, then, infinity is not in the premises we must not insert it in the conclusion. The reality of the infinite can be fully vindicated on other grounds and by other modes of reasoning, but it is not in the conclusion of this method. We are not to conclude, however, that this argument has no value even if has to be understood with these limitations. By confining the proof to its own proper sphere we relieve it from certain objections, and at the same time we concentrate the force of its proof. Within its own domain it is almost free from well grounded objection, and it possesses immense argumentative value. Theism is safe if the reality of an extra-mundane purposing intelligence is established. This we believe the teleo-theistic method does very effectively, and it thus supplies one of the most satisfactory lines of reasoning by means of which the reality

of the divine existence is established, and the belief in God is upheld and justified to human reason.

SECTION II.

OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED.

These objections may be divided into two classes. In the one class the *logical form* of the argument is impugned, and in the other its *subject matter* is questioned. Advocates of the former line of attack maintain that we cannot by a strictly logical process reach the conclusion which the teleo-theistic method seeks to establish. Those who call the subject matter in question claim that all the facts of adaptation can be accounted for apart from the hypothesis of all intelligence beyond nature.

In regard to the logical objections we need not say very much. All objections based on the supposition that the proof is merely analogical are warded off when we show that the inference is strictly inductive. Analogy cannot prove; it only illustrates, and answers objections. By induction we can solve problems, and transform a well-grounded hypothesis into a properly reasoned truth. The objection that the argument from final cause puts the effect in the place of the cause is refuted when we see the proper logical form of the proof, and understand what is meant by final as distinct from efficient cause. The only logical objection which requires further notice is that pressed by some recent writers, especially by Hicks in his "Critique of the Design Arguments." The position taken is that the teleo-theistic argument cannot be stated without assuming the conclusion it professes to establish. They admit that the eutaxio-theistic argument has logical validity but assert that the teleo-theistic has not. The former does not assume intelligence, but the latter does. The facts of order justify the

inference of mind, but the facts of adaptation assume intelligence. The former is logical, the latter only reaches mind by being illogical.

In answer to this objection we remark that if it be valid it proves too much. If adaptation takes intelligence for granted so also does order. If special order assumes mind so also does general order. If the teleo-theistic method is illogical so is the eutaxio-theistic. If Hicks has swept away the one he has destroyed the other. But the true view is that both are logically valid. The mistake Hicks makes consists in taking the two methods to be generically distinct. He also confounds the inductive and deductive process involved in this method. Deduction starts with principles which are stated in the premises, and we can never get anything into the conclusion which is not at least tacitly in the premises. Hence, if the fact of intelligence be not in the premises, it can never get into the conclusion, according to the deductive method which merely unfolds analytically the content of the premises. By means of induction, however, we are able to reach a conclusion beyond the facts, and synthetically discover a law or principle. In both the eutaxio-theistic and teleo-theistic methods we proceed inductively in establishing the premises. These premises are really the conclusions of inductive processes. When the premises are thus established a single deduction process enables us to reach the final conclusion of this method. Then, since by the inductive method we get intelligence into the premises, so we are justified in putting it into the conclusion. Both the order and design arguments occupy precisely the same logical position, and hold the same indirect relation to the principle of causality. Both are also logically valid. In the one we observe marks of order or plan, in the other we observe marks of adaptation or purpose. In both cases we posit intelligence as the adequate explanation, and thus the objection vanishes.

There are three objections bearing on the subject matter of this method which merit attention. The first is related to the

doctrine of *subjectivity*, the second is connected with the theory of *immanence*, and the third is involved in the hypothesis of *evolution*. We can devote only a brief paragraph to each.

The objection which springs from the doctrine of *subjectivity* does not absolutely deny finality. It simply holds that what is called design is a necessary mental condition in relation to certain facts in nature. In other words, finality is a law of mind rather than a law of things. The observer does not *find* it in nature but he *thinks* it into nature. We make two remarks in reply. The first is that it is a mistake to draw the line between the real and phenomenal so strictly as the phenomenalism which underlies this objection really does. There are different kinds of reality and various classes of phenomena. The result of the separation between the phenomenal and the noumenal, which Kant insisted on so much, is either a scepticism which denies all knowledge of reality or an agnosticism which claims that our powers do not enable us to know the real, or a positivism which asserts that all we know is phenomena and their laws. In the second place, if the argument be inductive in its form, finality cannot be merely subjective. By the inductive process we observe *in nature* certain marks of purpose and adaptation, and thus we begin in the objective sphere. If finality were merely a mental principle then it would have the same necessity and universality that causality has. We would then see design in everything. But as a matter of fact we do not observe finality in everything in nature. We see it in some things but not in others, and there must be an objective ground for this distinction. Finality is in things, we observe it there, and by induction we postulate intelligence as its only proper explanation.

The second objection is connected with the theory of *immanence*. This objection admits that finality exists as a fact *in nature*, but it asserts that we do not require to go beyond nature itself for the solution of finality. Design in nature is admitted, but extramundane intelligence is denied. This objection is connected

chiefly with the name of Hegel. Some who hold this theory of immanent finality regard it as connected with absolute reason. This absolute reason may be viewed as conscious or unconscious, and advocates of this objection differ on this point. The world-soul of the Stoics and the Hegelian doctrine of immanency incline to the view that it is conscious, though in some places Hegel denies that it is either conscious or free. Schopenhauer who admits a kind of finality maintains that it is unconscious though immanent.

Two remarks may be made in refuting this objection. In the first place, the notion of unconscious immanent finality must either deny intelligence altogether or perish in a contradiction. Unconscious intelligence is an utter contradiction in terms. In order to give the objection even the appearance of cogency it must admit a measure of intelligence, and a degree of consciousness in the inner activity of nature which this theory says is sufficient to explain the facts of adaptation. In the second place, the advocates of immanent finality admit that design or purpose is a fact in nature. The only question is as to the manner in which this finality is to be explained. Is a mere immanent intelligence conscious or unconscious sufficient, or must we go beyond nature? Almost everything that the upholders of immanency maintain may be admitted and yet the material of the teleo-theistic method would remain. This immanent intelligence itself needs an explanation, and thus the theistic hypothesis is necessary, for an explanation which needs explanation can never be final. Hence, we conclude that the theory of finality neither destroys nor supersedes this method.

The last objection comes from evolution. This important hypothesis calls for careful consideration at the hands of both science and theology. Many of its advocates are anti-Christian, and some are avowedly atheistic. On the other hand, some able and thoughtful Christian men are prepared to admit that the main positions of scientific evolution are not inconsistent with Theism. At present we have to deal with the bearing of evolution on the teleo-theistic

method. Does evolution destroy, or enable us to dispense with the theistic inference connected with the design argument?

In answering this question we have to distinguish between the earlier and cruder forms of evolution, and its later or scientific forms. Wallace and Darwin are types of the former, Comte and Spencer of the latter. The former deal chiefly with evolution in the biological sphere, but the latter seek to embrace all the sciences under the principles of the evolutionary method. Our space permits only one or two critical remarks on a vast topic.

In regard to the Darwinian form of evolution, we observe that while it professes to supersede finality, yet it constantly falls back on the facts of teleology. The Darwinians speak constantly of *selection*, *adaptation* and *fitness*, terms which denote the very facts to which finality relates. If we take the law of tendency to vary in all directions, we are on the ground of the doctrine of chance already considered. If we take the law of natural selection, by means of which the variation is modified under given conditions, the question at once arises, why does the variation take one line rather than another? Only the answer of the teleo-theistic method is sufficient here. In short, every upward movement in the progress that evolution describes presents problems which demand the teleo-theistic inference. Of course, if evolution in any form essays to explain the origin of things it goes beyond its province, and will assume an atheistic form.

The Spencerian evolution is bolder in its claims than the Darwinian. It claims to be encyclopædic. It is really a vast effort to build up a purely abstract monism. It is doubtful if Spencer has succeeded as well as Spinoza, who long ago made a similar attempt along other lines. In Spencer's hands the principle of evolution becomes a kind of transformism. It assumes atoms and force; and a not very clearly defined relation of co-ordination between the homogeneous and the heterogeneous is taken as its fundamental principle. Even if we admit that Spencer's system gives a sound

natural history of the development of the cosmos from its original condition of stable equilibrium in the homogeneous, the question still arises, how does the first step in the movement towards the heterogeneous take place? Is it fortuitous? Is it necessary? Both these views have been disposed of in the previous chapter. Then, again, does the homogeneous contain within itself the principle of its own development? If so, we have merely the doctrine of immanence in another form. This principle still requires explanation. No explanation short of the hypothesis of an intelligent power will account for the movement of the homogeneous in any, much less a given direction. And, further, it is to be observed that all along the line of development, evolution gives rather the natural history than the philosophy of the process. In order to defend the teleo-theistic method from this objection we do not require to refute Spencer's doctrines generally. We need only show that even if true they do not supersede this method. Even if evolution be admitted as a history of nature's development, that development itself, in its origin, direction and progress, demands explanation. It is evident that the series in the cosmos can neither originate, direct nor continue itself. The ground of its explanation must lie beyond the series.



CHAPTER VI.

THE ESO-THEISTIC METHOD.

This chapter brings us again to the much disputed ground of intuition. When discussing, in the first part of this essay, the various methods of explaining the origin of the idea of God, we found that the method of intuition properly understood affords the most satisfactory explanation of the genesis of theistic ideas. We now approach the material there reviewed by a different path; and we shall also proceed to use it for another purpose. In the former part of the essay we found the *origin* of the idea of the Divine Being in intuition; in the discussion of this chapter we are invited to examine the nature of that intuition logically, for the purpose of discovering what evidence it affords of the actual *existence* of God. It will be observed that the question now before us has not reference so much to the psychology of theistic ideas, as to the objective validity of the intuition. Does the Being to whom the intuition relates *exist*, and how can we vindicate the position that there is an objective reality agreeing with the intuition? In seeking to unfold the answer to these questions we require to consider two topics. In the first place, we must carefully unfold the content of the intuition; and in the second place, we are required to indicate the logical significance of that content in vindicating the rational character of the belief in God's existence. It may be best to treat each of these in a separate section.

SECTION I.

THE CONTENT OF THE THEISTIC INTUITION.

When discussing the methods of the origin of the idea of God in the human mind, we found, in the chapter in which intuition was dealt with, that the theistic belief was a simple and ultimate conviction of our nature of which no further analysis can be given than that it is native to, and inseparable from, our very being. It is an ineradicable fact, and in its very nature not capable of being reduced to lower terms. This conviction or primitive belief is the product, neither of evolution, induction nor revelation. On the other hand, it must be pre-supposed before theistic predicates can be applied to any object, and in order to make reasoning about God possible, or a revelation from God intelligible. It was also seen that the instinct of worship was associated with this conviction or intuitive belief concerning God. It was further hinted that the most feasible metaphysical explanation of the ground or cause of this conviction is to be found in regarding it as virtually God's testimony in the soul of man to the reality of His existence, and to the direct spiritual relation He sustains to the human mind.

A more detailed exposition of what is involved in the position just stated than was given in the previous chapter is necessary at this stage. We do not deem it requisite to enter into a full discussion of the *a-priori* elements of cognition in general, nor do we think it necessary to vindicate at length the reality of the intuitive factors in human knowledge. A few things in this connection, however, require to be emphasized and kept clearly in view, especially in the theistic discussions of the present day. The spirit of modern science looks with distrust upon the *a-priori* features of knowledge. Positive philosophy rejects all entities, and banishes all essences from its domain. Some writers who profess to be very advanced in their thinking describe the region of intuition as the

haunt of mysteries, and as a storehouse of difficulties. Others regard intuition as merely a name for certain subjective feelings or opinions, which have no inherent stability, and no objective validity. If these claims of modern scientific thought be well grounded, then both our philosophy and our theology must be phenomenal in its nature. To justify the general positions of the intuitionist theory is necessary, in order to provide us with an adequate psychology, and with the proper rational ground for Theism and Christianity.

We therefore maintain that the human mind in its original nature and endowment is not merely a *tabula abrasa*. On the contrary, it possesses certain native capacities, and it involves certain fundamental conditions of cognition. These capacities or conditions are not of the nature of innate ideas or fully developed principles of knowledge. They are not even to be regarded as matured powers or well defined faculties. They are rather simple native powers or potential capacities, which antedate all definite empirical knowledge, and condition the modes of its acquisition. In the nature of the case, they cannot be the product of education, association or experience. They must be presupposed before education can begin, before association can come into play, and before experience can be realized. We have now before us the philosophical tournament of the ages. From Confucius and the Greek empiricists down to Comte and modern empiricists, we have the same contest going on. We see phenomenalism with its empirical method on the one side of the arena, and realism with its intuitive method on the other. In this contest we cast our lot with the intuitionists.

It is important to notice how the intuitive element runs through all departments of human knowledge. In varied forms it is present in all cognition. Some advocates of intuitionism have perhaps made a mistake in connecting intuition with a special faculty, or in confining it to particular elements of our knowledge. As we look upon it, intuition in some form underlies and conditions all

the modes of cognition. This intuitive factor stands related to the real and the supersensible, which is manifested phenomenally through what has by some been called the external and internal senses. Thus intuition has a place in sense-perception. In the knowledge of material objects about us, which we have by the external senses, the phenomenal element is known by the senses, but intuition gives us the real or permanent factor in these objects. It is here that the truth and error in Kant's doctrine of sensuous intuition appears. In self-consciousness, also, in which we have a knowledge of self and its operations, intuition is present. The internal sense, as it has been called, manifests, as phenomena, the products of the various mental operations, while the real or permanent is given in the intuition of self. This phase of intuition corresponds with what Kant calls the unity of apperception, which he places at the root of the categories. Then we have what may be called rational intuition, where we rise from phenomenal co-existences and sequences to higher unities or ideals. This form of intuition naturally divides into three branches, related to the *true*, the *complete*, and the *right*, respectively. The true corresponds with the Platonic *idea* which is the real in the phenomenal in this particular sphere. The complete is the beautiful or ideal connected with what has often been called the æsthetic faculty. The right stands related to the moral faculty or practical reason, which gives us, not as the result of induction but as the product of intuition, the knowledge of the real and abiding distinction between things right and things wrong, in our moral nature and its activities. Then once more, and rising a step higher in our analysis, we find the intuitions of our religious nature. Here we enter the shere of religion proper, for religion is more than a matter of intellect, of emotion, or of morality. The theistic intuition and the instinct of worship are to be located in what may be termed our religious nature. As to the reality of the facts of man's religious nature there can be no doubt. The question now before us has reference

to the significance of these facts. We deal now specially with the theistic intuition and with the instinct of worship. Has this intuition objective validity? Is there any Being to worship? Or is the intuition a mere creation of reason, and the instinct of worship simply a subjective sentiment?

Now, in order to justify the claims of intuition in general, and of the theistic intuition in particular, certain tests are required to distinguish intuition from individual opinion. By what marks are we to know which are the ultimate elements in our knowledge? What are the tests of those elements of cognition which cannot be reduced to lower terms? These tests have been presented in nearly the same way by different writers. We may mention the three following as sufficient for our present purpose: Necessity, Universality and Congruity. By necessity it is meant that those elements in our knowledge which cannot be dispensed with, which are involved in all our mental processes, which assert their presence amid all the changes of the phenomenal, and which condition the mode in which the phenomenal shall be manifested, are to be regarded as intuitive. Universality implies that those features in cognition which appear in all ages, in all circumstances, and among all men as fundamental facts in regard to the way in which the human mind acquires its knowledge, are to be looked upon as intuitive. By Congruity it is understood that there must be harmony amongst our various intuitions, and between our intuitions and all the other psychological facts of our nature. Among our intuitions there must be no contradiction, but rather inherent consistency. They, in their very nature, give unity to experience, which would otherwise be fragmentary, unrelated and without cohesion. If we apply these tests to the theistic intuition and the instinct of worship, we find that the intuitive nature of these facts is amply vindicated. When this intuition and instinct first rises in the soul it may not be fully formed. It may be vague and require many influences to reduce it to definiteness. It is, however, the sponta-

neous outcome of the soul, and not the result of reflection or experience. The question now before us has reference to the evidential value of this intuition in relation to the actual existence of God. What is its value as a method of proof?

SECTION II.

THE LOGICAL IMPORT OF THE THEISTIC INTUITION.

We now reach one of the mountain passes in the pathway along which we are pursuing the theistic inference. If we can cross the mountains and make good the claims of the evidence of intuition, Theism is safe on rational grounds. But the pathway here is dangerous. Those who hold the doctrine of the relativity of all human knowledge will here oppose our advance. Hamilton, with his doctrine of the unconditioned, will invite us to turn aside into the byway of nescience which ends in a wilderness, and he will bid us look by faith up to the heights which, he says, reason cannot climb. The positivist will also introduce himself and solemnly assure us that there is no way over the mountains, and that there is no use of trying to scale heights which are ever hidden from the senses in the clouds. Even the pantheist will appear on the scene and with a devout air will inform us that we shall be sure to lose our way, if we try to cross the mountains.

At the outset, therefore, it is of the last importance to understand aright the logical function of the theistic intuition. What special purpose does it serve? It neither *forms* nor *proves* its object; it simply *attests* the reality of its object. It is neither a mechanic nor a logician; it is only a witness. Its function is entirely different, therefore, from that of the general conception or necessary notion, and also from that of inductive generalization. The conception frames its own object, and necessarily leaves the

question of its objective validity an open one. The intuition is rather a revelation of an object whose objective validity is attested by the very existence of the intuition. In this, too, lies the difference between the onto-theistic inference, and the evidence of the eso-theistic method. Again, the intuition is not an inductive inference or generalization from experience ; it is rather an axiom or postulate bearing testimony to the prior existence and reality of its object. Thus, again, the method of intuition differs logically from some of those methods already considered, where the inductive principle in different forms is the key to the inference. We will also observe how this view of the logical function of intuition agrees with what was said when we were examining the psychological nature of the theistic intuition. The ground of the intuition, it was suggested, may be found in the divine witness in man's soul to the actual existence of God. It is a kind of inspiration. If, therefore, the intuition authoritatively attests the objective validity of its object, then the suggestion formerly made regarding the psychology of the theistic intuition is confirmed.

Those who reject the evidence of intuition in regard to Theism, usually deny that we have a knowledge of anything but phenomenal sequences and their laws. This denial, of course, destroys the evidence by annihilating the object to which it relates. If this be done, then the problem of reconciling positive science and religion is solved by blotting out one side of the equation. But God is not phenomenal in the sense that his essential being is manifested to the senses. God is supersensible and noumenal. We may trace His footprints in nature, we may see his handwriting on the pages of human history, and we may find his doings inscribed in the record of the Bible, yet his real being is veiled in mystery so far as the senses are concerned. But, in order that God may manifest himself or leave traces that he is, he must actually have existence. That such is the true state of the question there can be no reasonable doubt. The evidence of intuition is higher than that of the senses ;

and by means of it the reality which is under or behind phenomena is attested as actually existing. We do not now raise the question as to the nature of this reality, but simply find the intuition bearing witness to it.

Perhaps the best way to vindicate the claims of the theistic intuition to have objective validity, is to draw evidence of a somewhat peculiar kind from the theories of those who reject intuition altogether. It is both interesting and instructive to observe the difficulties in which those who repudiate intuition find themselves, when trying to explain certain things in our knowledge, and in regard to the way in which it is acquired. Comte, for example, after constructing a most elaborate positive system, which is half science and half philosophy, goes on to set up ideal humanity as a kind of deity, and to prescribe, in connection with this deity, a very absurd cultus. In doing this Comte confesses the insufficiency of his system, and gives valuable testimony to the reality of the theistic intuition and of the instinct of worship. In like manner Spencer assumes a reverential tone, and speaks almost devoutly of the dark and inscrutable mystery which lies beyond phenomena and their laws. This unknown or unknowable something or some one, whether it be substance, power, or personality, is virtually set up on a throne, and we are exhorted to bow down before it and worship it as God. Here again we may compel Spencer to bear unwilling testimony to the reality of the theistic intuition. Harrison has pretty clearly shown that Spencer is inconsistent ; but we would combat Spencer, not as Harrison does by assuming the position of extreme positivism where even the reality of mystery is denied, but by presenting the theistic intuition with its accompanying attestation to the reality of its object as the proper solution.

So, again, we would press into service here the great scientific principle of which so much is made at the present day, and from which so much more is expected in the near future. This principle is generally termed "the correlation of forces." According to this

doctrine, it is held that all force in the universe is one and uniform. It may manifest itself in various forms, but these are all convertible. This force lies at the root of all the changes going on in the universe ; and the mechanical, vital and chemical forms of this force are interchangeable. Heat, light, electricity, gravitation, nerve energy and will power, are all the same in their essence, and along materialistic lines they are mutually convertible. Now, it is to be carefully observed here that force in its essential nature is never present to the senses. The senses only perceive the phenomenal sequences, while intuition attests that there is an ever present potency behind these sequences. Even if we grant the truth of the doctrine of correlation, which we do only within certain narrow physical limits, the question still remains as to the nature of this power or potency. Is it material or spiritual ? In the latest deliverances of scientific thought, the necessity of admitting a spiritual background to phenomena is pressing itself more and more upon the minds of thoughtful men. But whether this force is material or spiritual, it is at least supersensuous, and as such is inconsistent with any system which confines knowledge to phenomena. In relation to this supersensible background intuition has a place and a function. Intuition attests the objective validity of this background, and thus leaves room for Theism.

In addition to the foregoing considerations, there are many others which point to the objective and noumenal validity of the theistic intuition, but we can only mention some of them. The feeling of dependence which so generally exists in the human mind testifies to a higher power outside of man's soul. The doctrine of the world-soul is perhaps another vague effort to give expression to the objective reality of the theistic intuition. The almost universal phenomena of religious worship among men of all races and ages is also full of significance in this connection. But we cannot enlarge on any of these lines of confirmation.

Assuming, therefore, that the theistic intuition has objective validity, and that the intuition is at once a revelation from and a witness to the actual existence of its object, it remains to define, as far as we can, what the nature of that object is.

We admit that the object which the intuition bears witness to may not be an infinite personal God. Hence, we cannot agree with Schelling and Calderwood, who hold that we have given in intuition an immediate knowledge of the infinite, or absolute, as a personal God. Nor is the object attested to by the theistic intuition a mere matter of faith. Hence, we cannot agree with Jacobi and Hamilton, unless they mean by faith what we mean by intuition. Nor, again, is it a product of mere intellection, so that we are unable to agree with Fichte and others who take this view. The theistic intuition belongs to our religious nature, as we have already seen, and its object is what is usually termed the absolute or infinite viewed in relation to the mind of man. In this connection we may state that the terms infinite and absolute are taken to denote substantially the same thing ; and, hence, we cannot accept Hamilton's usage of these words. He uses *infinite* in the sense of that which can never be completed, and *absolute* in the sense of that which is complete in itself and unrelated. But the infinite should not be contrasted in this way with the absolute. The absolute is that which has no necessary dependence on or relation to any other thing ; the infinite is that which cannot be completed by any finite additions, for example, infinite space and time. The infinite is thus the absolute viewed in relation to the finite.

If we keep this in mind, it will enable us to avoid many difficulties, and it will clear the way for a better understanding of the nature of the object which the theistic intuition bears witness to. We pointed out in a former part of the essay that it was a mistake which caused much confusion to think of the infinite, or rather the absolute, under the category of substance. It should rather be ranked under the category of cause. If we so think of it, we have

the proper view of the object of the theistic intuition. It is not the sum total of all reality, (*ens realissimum*) nor is it pure being, but it is a presence, or a potency, which ever comes before us in all our experiences. The absolute viewed as cause or efficiency is that, the reality of which the intuition attests. We cannot say that it is a personal God, but the natural inference is that that which possesses power or efficiency, and is thus causal in its nature, must be an agent; and, being an agent, it must be intelligent. In the presence of this power we ever find ourselves, and the theistic intuition enable us to go behind phenomena, with an unquestioned attestation that there is an absolute reality or potency ever in the act of revealing itself to us. So long as this position is securely held, Theism has nothing to fear either from pantheism or positivism. This potency cannot find its adequate ground either in that which is purely material or in that which is merely phenomenal. It must rest its feet in the temple of the spiritual.



CHAPTER VII.

THE ETHICO-THEISTIC METHOD.

We now reach one of the most cogent of all the theistic proofs. Next to the design argument, the moral argument has received in recent times more elaborate discussion than any of the other proofs of the divine existence. It is almost as readily understood as the design argument by the ordinary mind, and it is less open to attack, perhaps, than any of the proofs yet considered. By some writers it is relied on almost exclusively to establish the fact of the existence of God. Some even go so far as to say that the moral faculty is the religious organ of the soul, that the dictates of conscience are the voice of God in man, and that by means of the moral nature man has an immediate intuition of God as a distinct personality. It need scarcely be remarked here that Kant, after he had shown as he thought and as many others have since thought, that all the ordinary logical proofs were more or less inconclusive and contradictory, rested in the moral argument for the theistic inference. In a somewhat circuitous way he finds in the moral law without, and the categorical imperative within, man's moral nature a sure ground for belief in God, freedom and immortality. Hamilton takes nearly the same view, and says that for the belief in immortality and the existence of God, we must rest on the ground of man's moral nature. Flint and after him Diman work out this line of proof in a very careful and effective manner.

But it is to be remembered that the theistic proof is complex and cumulative. The moral proof is not the only valid line of inference ; it is merely one of the many lines all converging toward the same conclusion. To stake the validity of the proof of the existence of God on the ethico-theistic method alone, as some German writers and others have done, is to tell some of the best allies Theism has that they are not needed, and at the same time to flatter the moral argument even more than it deserves. It has its place, and a very important place, along with the other lines of proof. It may not do as much as some of the arguments already considered to establish the fact of the divine existence, but it will enable us to clothe the divine Being with nobler attributes than any of the foregoing methods have done. The moral argument, however, must be kept in its proper place.

In unfolding the proof here we find that it naturally divides itself into two branches. We have one line of proof connected with the fact of duty, which fact involves the notion of right and the sense of obligation. This line is largely psychological, and may be termed the deonto-theistic branch of ethico-theism. The other branch of proof stands related to the moral order of the universe, and to the notion of the highest good, or *summum bonum*. This branch is rather ontological in its nature, and it may be designated the agatho-theistic phase of ethico-theism. A brief section will be devoted to each of these branches of the argument. A third section of this chapter will be devoted to a review of the Kantian criticism of the theistic proofs in general, and of his relation to the moral argument in particular.

SECTION I.

DEONTO-THEISM.

This section has to deal with the moral faculty, and the testimony it bears to the existence of God. What is the nature of the facts of conscience, and how far are we justified in making the theistic inference from these facts? Some writers maintain that the validity of the inference does not depend on any particular theory as to the origin of the moral faculty, and in regard to the nature of moral distinctions. Flint incidentally takes this position, but others assert it much more decidedly than he does. Taking the facts of our moral nature as they are, looking at the notions of rightness and oughtness as we find them, these writers say that we are justified in making the theistic inference apart from any theory as to their origin. We admit that this position may be successfully maintained, yet if morality is derivative and not ultimate in its nature, we feel that the argument it supplies for the existence of God is considerably weakened. If, therefore, the force of the proof is affected by the view we take of the nature of morality and of the origin of conscience, Theism cannot afford to be indifferent to the form of ethical theory which it adopts. A brief outline of these theories may be given, with a view to the adoption of the true one, and for the purpose of bringing into clear relief how this method leads out to the vindication of Theism. In a general way, all types of ethical theory may be divided into four classes. We look at these in order, and estimate their theistic import.

To the first class belongs all those forms of ethical theory which find the origin of the ideas of rightness and oughtness in some form of external law, restraint or authority. Thus Hobbes presents civil law and the authority of the state as the ground of morality. Bain and others maintain that conscience is merely the type within the individual of the restraints, parental, civil and social, by which he

is surrounded. Morality thus springs from a kind of fear, and obligation, in the first instance at least, is nothing more than a dread of the penalty of violated external law. It is clear that all such doctrines either presuppose the notion of right, or place moral distinctions on a purely arbitrary basis. The idea of right underlies that of law, and law can have no inherent and absolute authority unless it is founded on the notion of rightness. The *right* and the *ought* are ethical atoms, and are incapable of further analysis. The theistic inference may perhaps be properly made from this view of morals, yet it is clear that it does not follow necessarily from it.

In the second class we would range all those theories which make pleasure, self-love, or utility in any form, the basis of morals and the source of the idea of rightness. Here we have Epicurus, Helvetius, Bentham, Paley, Mill, and many others who, with certain differences in details, agree in their general principles. These views, taken together, are generally termed the Utilitarian system. It assumes two general forms. The lower form is purely individualistic or egoistic in its nature. This is the selfish system, where the idea of duty rests on that which conduces to the happiness or utility of the individual. The higher and more modern form of the theory is what is called universalistic or altruistic hedonism at the present day. Here the notion of the general good of mankind is made the ground of morality. That which tends to the good of the greatest number, that which is benevolent rather than selfish, is right and ought to be done. All these views agree in denying that the ideas of rightness and oughtness involved in the notion of duty are simple and ultimate. They are derived from self-love, happiness, or utility in some form, and are thus developed. It is evident that utilitarians do not succeed in either reducing the notions of right and ought to lower terms, or in showing clearly how facts which are first expressed in terms of self-love come to be expressed in terms of right or ought. The utilitarian doctrine, even in its most refined form, cannot fully explain the fact of obliga-

tion. It may postulate it and emphasise its import, but it cannot explain it. The desirable which is merely optional, can never, on utilitarian principles, be transformed into the dutiful which is obligatory ; nor can the self-interestedness from which the utilitarian starts ever be elevated by him into the disinterestedness which he must admit in human conduct, without violating the fundamental principles of his theory. If he attempts to do so the notion of right will either be ignored or assumed, and the notion of ought will be left unexplained by this theory. The natural tendency of this theory is therefore anti-theistic ; and if it be true, Theism has at least uncertain footing so far as the moral argument is concerned.

As forming a third class we may mention those views of ethics which are connected with scientific evolution. These views are mostly quite recent in their origin. Spencer's *Data of Ethics* made the first attempt to cover the ground of morality by the method of evolution. This book has value, not so much in itself, as on account of the fact that directly or indirectly, polemically or apologetically, it has been instrumental in giving us such treatises on ethics as we have from Green, Sidgwick, Bradley, Stephen and Martineau. Evolutionists must account for ethical facts. They must explain the origin and deliverances of conscience by means of the principles of their system. They must also provide a basis for moral obligation. Their explanations run along hereditary and socialistic lines. Those things which tend to conserve society are by a kind of natural selection lifted up above those things which do not, and in the course of time men begin to call these things right and to say that they ought to be done. Then each successive generation leaves what may be termed an ethical deposit to which the next generation falls heir, and so by degrees the idea of rightness clearly emerges, and the notion of oughtness is clothed with commanding authority. Morality then rests in those things which are necessary for the existence and well-being of the social fabric. It seems pretty clear that evolutionists have not yet

succeeded in presenting an adequate ethical system. They have given an elaborate natural history of the way in which ethical facts are developed or modified, but they have not reduced duty to lower terms, nor have they shown how moral obligation comes to be absolute in its nature. Evolutionary ethics even if true may not destroy the theistic inference, but the form of that inference must be modified, if not reconstructed, in order to meet the new conditions of the problem.

In the fourth class we place all those theories which maintain that the principles of morality are ultimate, that conscience is an original faculty, and that the ideas of rightness and oughtness are simple and irreducible in their nature. The general systems holding this view may differ in details, but they all agree that moral principles are ultimate, and incapable of further analysis. From Socrates down to Hutcheson and intuitionists generally we find advocates of this theory. We believe that this is the true doctrine; and what has been already said when discussing the method of intuition prepares us for the acceptance of this theory without much additional exposition. Conscience or the moral faculty we take to be an original or intuitive element in our nature. The distinction between things right and things wrong we believe to be ultimate and underived. The authority of conscience, and the control it exercises not only over what we ought not to do, but also over what it commands us to perform is simple and absolute, and cannot be resolved into anything else.

This being the nature of conscience and of the notions of rightness and oughtness, the theistic inference is easy and natural. We cannot stop with a simple statement of the psychological nature of obligation; we are naturally led to infer an objective ground for this authority. The form of the inference here is nearly the same as in the method of intuition, only the material of the inference is different. The moral nature, with the facts of rightness and oughtness belonging to it, bears testimony to the existence and moral

attributes of God. The postulate of the existence of God, and that he is moral governor, will more fully satisfy all the conditions of the problems of duty than any other. It will give an objective ground for the idea of right, and for the sense of obligation, which is in harmony with the psychological nature of these facts. Conscience, it may be remarked, does not give us a direct intuition of God as moral governor, for the direct object of conscience is morality. But the law to which conscience requires obedience cannot be the product of my own moral nature. It must come from a lawgiver other than myself. The *de jure* authority of conscience is an abiding attestation to a source of authority which is above it. If, therefore, man's moral nature does not contain within itself the explanation of all its facts, the theistic hypothesis is not only the natural but also the necessary solution of its problem.

SECTION II.

AGATHO-THEISM.

This section has to discuss the theistic significance of the notion of the highest good. This good has to be regarded as not only for the individual but also for the moral order and well-being of society. Is there a good towards which men may strive, and strive not in vain? Is there an ideal to which society may look forward, and a good in which it hopes some day to rest? Is there a moral order in the universe, where in the long run, either in this life or in a future state, the right shall triumph and the evil be overpowered? Is pessimism or optimism the true philosophy of human life? In ancient times the question of the nature of the highest good was largely discussed by moralists. The Platonists, the Stoics and the Epicureans, from different standpoints, gave prominence to this idea in their systems.

The question of the relation of the good to the right is confessedly a difficult one, and cannot be fully discussed here. As the aspiration of man's nature rises up and longs for an ideal desirable good, how far is it to be controlled by the right? It would be a mistake to subordinate the right to the good, for this would throw us on the ground of expediency, where the measure of obligation would be determined by consequences rather than by the idea of right. In the long run we believe that the good and the right will harmonize. A thing is never right simply *because* it is good and makes us happy, but the right will in the end ever be found to conduce to our highest good in the true sense of the term. In society, too, we find that no real good is ever lost. Virtue never dies. Truth is immortal. This is the morning star of an optimism which aspires hopefully towards the realization of the supreme good. The attainment of this ideal is to be secured not so much by striving selfishly after it, as by the careful performance of right conduct. If this be the case, we would naturally expect that there should be harmony between the right and the good, between the dutiful and the desirable. We see how it is also that "we get happiness by doing right, and yet we are not to do right for the sake of happiness."

The inference here seems simple. If there be in man an aspiration after an ideal good, and if we find in society a gradual movement on towards higher and better things, the conclusion seems natural that all this points to an all-controlling Being, who is Himself absolute good as well as absolute right. To make good the inference here we do not require to remove all difficulties, or explain, for example, the origin of evil, or the existence of pain and suffering. It is enough if we find that virtue brings its own reward and vice its own punishment as a general rule. Even when right conduct may bring present pain, yet in the end we find that it elevates, ennobles and purifies the soul. The advance of the race towards the goal of the good may be very slow, but it is

nevertheless sure. With passing years there is substantial progress, and slowly but surely victory is declaring itself for the good. We conclude from all this that there is sufficient in these things to justify the conclusion that there is a Being who contains in Himself all the perfections towards which the individual aspires, and to the attainment of which society age after age is tending. There is a power which makes for righteousness. With the theistic inference thus vindicated we may cherish and rejoice in an optimism which is the beacon light of man's destiny. Atheism or agnosticism can only lead us down the dark and cheerless shades of pessimism. This form of the inference might be expanded and illustrated at any length, but this very brief statement of must suffice.

SECTION III.

THE KANTIAN CRITICISM.

The criticism of the current arguments of the natural theology of his day made by Kant requires special attention, both on account of its logical acuteness, and on account of the immense influence it has had upon the estimate put by very many writers since Kant's day, on the value of reasoning concerning the existence of God. Some, following Kant, rely almost entirely on the moral argument; and others, thinking all argumentation inconclusive, rest on revelation, or on the intuition of an infinite personal God, as the only safe ground to take against atheism. To see how far we should go in the direction Kant has marked out, and so many since him have followed, is a very important thing to do at the present day. Our conviction is that too much weight has been allowed to Kant's criticism of the ordinary rational proofs of the divine existence, and too much praise has been bestowed upon him

for the way in which he presented the moral proof. To justify this position will be the object of this brief section.

The exposition here may be conveniently divided into two parts. In the first we shall examine Kant's critique of the theistic proofs, and in the second we shall enquire as to his consistency in retaining the moral argument while rejecting the rational proofs. A few paragraphs only can be given to each of these points.

In the first place, we examine Kant's destructive criticism of the rational proofs of the existence of God. He first classifies these proofs under three heads. These are the ontological, the cosmological, and the teleological or physico-theological. This classification might be criticised as imperfect, if we wished to be very severe on Kant. But we only remark that his error here is, that he classifies these arguments as if they were entirely independent of each other, whereas they are supplementary to, and confirmatory of, each other.

The next stage of his criticism takes up these arguments in order, and proceeds to show that the ordinary proofs contained therein, if followed out, must land us in logical contradictions or antinomies. We have already hinted once or twice at some of his criticisms in our discussion of the onto-theistic proof. He says that the judgment concerning the existence of a necessary Being is analytical, not synthetical; and in making the theistic inference, he asserts that we either assume the existence of the object of the necessary idea, or identify our *thought* of the object with the object. He also denies that *existence* is a real predicate, and maintains that the fact that there is in the mind a conception of a necessary Being is no reason for concluding that such a Being actually exists. We admit that Kant's reasoning here has force against those forms of the onto-theistic proof which argue from the presence of the necessary idea to its objective validity. But we remark, first, that the necessary idea is not a conception, and hence not open to the criticism which Kant would make of the onto-theism of Anselm and Descartes. And

we remark, secondly, that the position already taken in this essay, that the postulate of the divine existence is the condition of the trustworthiness of human knowledge is not affected by the Kantian criticism. This is the stronghold of onto-theism, which need only surrender when absolute scepticism ascends the throne of human reason.

In dealing with the cosmological proof Kant handles it with considerable severity. We pass by, for the present, the fact that he virtually resolves it into the ontological argument. He maintains that the principle of causation, which is the ground of the cosmological proof, belongs only to the realm of experience and to the sphere of the phenomenal. The theistic proof, he says, makes a transcendental use of the category of cause in employing it to prove the existence of God, who is, of course, noumenal. In like manner, in the infinite series of phenomenal sequences, he says that we cannot get beyond the series to a first cause which is non-phenomenal. We make two remarks here. In the first place, this absolute separation between noumena and phenomena is not justifiable, so far as the theory of knowledge is concerned, and it has done harm to the interests both of philosophy and theology. It must land us in idealism in regard to the contents of cognition, or in agnosticism so far as the existence of the noumenal reality either of mind or matter is concerned. Fichte and Spencer are the logical descendants of Kant. In a true theory of cognition we believe that the intuitional and empirical elements so unite all along the line, that we have a knowledge alike of the noumenal and the phenomenal in all our cognitive acts. In the second place, we do not admit that the principle of causation belongs to the empirical sphere alone. The only supposition upon which this might be true, would be that there is no such a thing as efficient cause. All that we find in experience is change or succession, but this is merely phenomenal. We have also the conviction of power, potency or efficiency, and this we maintain is the real notion of cause. It is

given in intuition, it underlies change at every stage of the series as well as stands at its beginning. Kant can only make good his contention that the cosmological proof is invalid, by first binding the strong man of efficiency who dwells in the citadel of the noumenal and then spoiling his house.

He treats the teleological argument with a measure of respect, and has perhaps rendered good service in confining it to its legitimate sphere. His criticism of it in the first instance at least, is limitative rather than destructive. He shows that it had been used by natural theologians to prove too much. He pointed out that the design inference only justified the positing of a framer or an arranger of the universe, not an originator of it. God can only be the architect not the creator of the universe according to this argument. In like manner, the teleo-theistic proof does not warrant the conclusion that God is an infinite Being. The marks of intelligence in the universe may be many and evident, but they are nevertheless a finite quantity and may require a very great intelligence, but do not logically justify the inference that this intelligence has the attribute of infinity. Most Theists now frankly admit the propriety of both these criticisms. At the same time we maintain that the teleological proof has much value. The idea of infinity can be vindicated on other grounds, and the reality of a first cause who is originator or creator can be justified by other methods, and then the degree of intelligence demanded by the marks of design will most naturally attach itself to this first cause. We must not suppose, however, that because Kant very properly limited the design argument in this way, that we have no good rational ground for believing in an infinite Being who is creator.

Another important remark remains to be made in regard to the manner in which Kant proceeds with his criticism. It has been already stated that Kant resolves both the cosmological and teleological arguments into the ontological. He proceeds to do this in a very ingenious way, and endeavors to show that before the

theistic inference proper is really reached all the arguments must enter the domain of onto-theism. Then since the ontological proof is inconclusive both the others are also inconclusive. He, in short, reduces the stronger to the form of the weaker that he may the more easily destroy both. The theistic proof, we need only again remark, is cumulative in its nature, and the validity of the proof does not depend on the force of any single argument strong or weak, but on the combined strength of them all taken together. One argument establishes one element of the proof and another another element, and we must not reject all argumentation simply because any given proof does not establish the whole theistic position. Observe, further, what happens as Kant reduces the cosmological and the teleological proofs to the terms of the ontological, in order to reject them all. The onto-theistic proof is the only one that is *a-priori*. In the other two arguments there are *a-posteriori* elements. When Kant reduces these two to the *a-priori* form he quietly drops out of sight the *a-posteriori* elements altogether, and coolly ignores their logical significance. This consideration is of very great importance when taken along with Kant's statement that the design argument is the oldest and the best of all the proofs used to establish the fact of the divine existence. We cannot but feel that Kant either fails to show that these three arguments are identical in principle, or he succeeds only by ignoring the distinguishing *a-posteriori* factors in those that he reduces to lower terms. We conclude, therefore, that Kant's criticism of the rational proofs of the existence of God is not nearly so effective as is generally supposed, and that he has by no means shown that all arguments to prove the divine existence are necessarily inconclusive or self-contradictory in the sphere of reason.

Let us now see whether Kant is logically consistent when he passes to establish the theistic position by means of what has been called the moral argument. With him the idea of God was merely regulative of our thinking in the domain of pure reason. In the

sphere of practical reason, however, it is otherwise. The moral law is authoritative, and not merely regulative. The famous phrase, *the categorical imperative*, denotes the sense of obligation which we feel we are under to do the right.

We cannot now enter fully into the merits and demerits of the Kantian ethics. There seems much to confirm the opinion expressed by Patton and Schurman, that Kant should not be classed with the intuitionists proper, and that in applying the categorical imperative to practical conduct he must surrender to utilitarianism. In regard to the theistic significance of Kant's doctrine we make three remarks of a critical nature.

The first is, that Kant draws the line too sharply between pure and practical reason. He should not separate between the intellectual and moral faculties so distinctly as he does. If truth be the object of reason and right be the object of conscience, then the theistic inference stands in the same relation to both. If God as absolute right be the postulate of conscience, then God as absolute truth is the postulate of reason. To be consistent, Kant must either allow more significance to reason, or admit less on behalf of conscience in the argument for the existence of God. He cannot barter God away to the sceptic on the ground of pure reason, and expect to have him restored with little difficulty in the domain of practical reason.

In the second place, practical reason, like pure reason, must enter the field of experience before it can have its form filled with content. The categorical imperative is as empty as the categories are prior to experience. To say, then, that practical reason enables us to reach the noumenal more clearly than the pure reason enables us to reach that region is erroneous. In order to have content both pure and practical reason alike must move in the region of experience, where according to Kant all is phenomenal. In this case conscience brings us no nearer to God than reason, and on Kant's premises neither gives anything more than phenomena. In the

one case it pertains to knowledge, in the other to conduct, but in neither do we reach the noumenal. Both forms of the proof rightly understood have force, but Kant's doctrine is clearly inconsistent with itself.

The third remark relates to the precise basis of the moral argument and its relation to the other theistic proofs. In criticising the cosmological proof, Kant confines the conception of cause to phenomena, and refuses it any transcendental validity. Nor does he allow any proper place for the principle of *sufficient reason*. In this case it is difficult to see how he can justify the inference of the moral argument. The principles of cause and sufficient reason are at least indirectly related to the moral argument, and if the application of these principles cannot be made beyond experience, then it is difficult to know how Kant can maintain a rational position in the ethical sphere for the proof of God's existence. He can only do so by falling back on a direct intuition of God, or on mere faith. But we maintain that if this be a valid procedure in the realm of ethics, it is also good in the sphere of reason. The direct object of conscience is moral principles, and the inference we make does not so much give us the fact of the divine existence, as it will enable us to clothe the first cause with certain moral attributes. Rather than stake the rational justification of the belief in the existence of God upon the moral argument alone, as based on the facts of conscience, we would put it in its place along with the other theistic proofs, and rejoice that while it rests on some of them, they in turn are helped by it.



CHAPTER VIII.

THE HISTORICO-THEISTIC METHOD.

We now come to the last method our plan requires us to discuss. The field of the historico-theistic proof is very wide, and only a few hints can be given of the way in which the theistic argument here may be framed. There are two centres round which this evidence may be marshalled. Both are really historical in their nature. The one takes hold of the all but universal religious sentiment and belief in the existence of the deity or deities, and seeks its explanation. The other fixes attention on the march of human history, and asks how its facts can be accounted for. In the former case we have the familiar argument for God's existence from the *consensus gentium*, or as it is sometimes called—the proof from the *consensus populorum*. In the latter case we have the question of the philosophy of history raised, both in regard to the individual and in regard to the race. To each of these a section may be devoted, though a volume would be required to set forth even the leading facts which come under review here.

In the present practical age historical evidence is regarded of the highest value ; and hence, if Theism and Christianity are capable of clear historical justification on the one hand, and if on the other Theism and Christianity alone furnish the key to understand the phenomena of history aright, we are entitled to lay a good deal of stress on this method of Theism. In both the branches just indicated we find forcible elements of theistic evidence.

SECTION I.

THE CONSENSUS GENTIUM.

The universality of the belief in God is now seldom called in question. The cases mentioned by Lubbock can have little weight against such a mass of testimony as comes to us from all ages and from every land. Plato says that the belief in the gods is a natural and universal instinct. Aristotle says that all men have an opinion or belief regarding the gods. Cicero states the same thing at greater length. Calvin and Grotius give much evidence of the same nature. In modern times we find evidence of importance coming to us from two sources. In the first place, we have a vast mass of facts gathered by those who seek to explain the phenomena of religion by naturalistic methods, and according to the principles of scientific evolution. If there is one thing more than another that positivists and evolutionists have done during the present century, it is to show that the belief in deity, and the prevalence of the sentiment of worship, are found everywhere among men. We may borrow this material from the positivists for our present purpose, and return them our sincere thanks for the use of the same. In the second place, the study of what is now termed the science of comparative religion has added much additional force to this form of the evidence. The religious systems of ancient and modern times, of savage and civilized peoples, have been carefully studied. The sacred literature of these religions has been minutely examined, and their religious rites and elaborate ceremonies have been analyzed. From the religions of Egypt, Greece, Rome, India, China, Persia, Scandania, with their respective literatures and rites of worship, we have a vast mass of material put at our disposal. We gladly use it in the present argument, for it is easier to make bricks when we have the straw gathered for us. Among ruder tribes of the race we also get facts of a similar kind,

Travellers in uncivilized countries incidentally state many interesting things in this connection. The Indian tribes of our own continent, the savage tribes of Central Africa, and the inhabitants of the South Sea Islands alike supply us with material out of which to frame an effective inductive proof in favor of the theistic conclusion.

What then is the proper inference from these facts? Is it enough to stop with a simple enumeration of the facts, or must we enquire for their theistic significance? Those who adopt the principles of the positive philosophy will say that we have finished our task when we have discovered and classified all these facts. We have no warrant, they say, to enquire for causes, or even to raise a metaphysical question at all. This of course would make religion pure materialism, and God will be either shut out of view altogether or he must be a creation of our own. This way of explaining the problem cannot satisfy human reason, and it is rejected without any hesitation. It is a mere natural history of religion, as we have seen in another connection, and utterly inadequate as a philosophy of it.

A careful examination of the vast array of facts now before us goes to show that the *consensus populorum* has objective validity. It contains not merely a subjective sentiment, but it also involves a belief that the deities worshipped have a real objective existence. This is a very important point, and its significance is sometimes overlooked. Man's religious instinct, as shown by the facts before us, is not a mere idea or feeling of the mind, but it reaches forth and rests on an object beyond itself. This gives an important hint. It may not prove absolutely that there are deities, but it at least shows that men *believed* that such deities did exist, and that they acted as if they were convinced that these deities were not merely the creatures of their own minds. This fact has great argumentative value.

But we need not enlarge on this method. Its inference is a simple induction from the facts. These facts call for an explana-

tion. The theistic hypothesis is an all sufficient explanation. The supposition that there is a God is sufficient to account for the universal belief in God, and the general observance of religious rites and ceremonies as expressions of the sentiment or instinct of worship. No other hypothesis will suffice to explain all these facts, and so we rest in the theistic inference. It may be added that we cannot suppose that all the races and tribes have been under a delusion along the ages in regard to the dictates of their religious nature. Is it likely that there would be in man those almost universal sentiments were there no real existing object corresponding to them? It can scarcely be conceived that man would possess in the first instance, and retain during successive ages, the instinct of worship, if there were no real deity to be worshipped.

Another remark may be added. The argument from the *consensus gentium* gives hints of a primitive monotheism. As stated in a former part of the essay, the science of comparative religion not only brings out the fact that religious sentiment is universal, but it also shows pretty clearly that the earliest primitive belief was monotheistic rather than polytheistic. The primitive religious belief of India was no doubt monotheistic, and so with that of other countries. Polytheism seems to have been a later degradation of an early monotheism. Now, this primitive Theism could not result from education, nor is it all likely to have been an invention of man himself. The natural inference from such a universal belief is that the primitive belief was monotheistic. And the reasonable conclusion from such a universal and primitive belief or instinct is, that the Being to which it testifies, and before whom it bids us bow down and worship, has real objective existence.

SECTION II.

THE INFERENCE FROM HISTORY.

The question here relates to the philosophy of history. The material to be considered is very extensive and also varied in its nature. We need scarcely wonder that the philosophy of history should only be recently attempted, and that it should be yet in its infancy. When we think how much a single life means, and how much the experience of one man involves, we need not wonder that the material gathered from all history should be so vast as to render the task of reducing it to its principles an exceedingly difficult one. It comprises all that bears on the well-being of man, and everything that relates to science, art, law, social life, thought and religion among men in all ages. A complete massing of all the facts, however, may not be necessary to justify an important theistic inference.

Various attempts have been made to unfold a philosophy of history. Comte and the evolutionists explain history in accordance with certain socialistic and physiological principles. All such attempts are failures. However patiently they may bring the facts into orderly view, they merely state the problem in a very partial way, but do not provide any solution for it. Herder and others, among whom Vico and Buckle may be mentioned, seek to give certain explanations of the facts of history, which are rather socialistic or political than philosophical in their nature. They are all imperfect. Edwards and Bossuet proceed to give the religious explanation, with the idea of redemption underlying it. Their views are doubtless true, but they presuppose the theistic conception of the universe and of human destiny, whereas this is the very question to be settled. Is the true philosophy of human history to be found in Theism? Does Theism solve the problem of human activity and destiny which sociology and philosophy can only

propound? This we take to be the real state of the question, Science may state, but Theism solves the problem.

Two able attempts have been made to unfold a philosophy of history on purely rational grounds. In the first place, we have that of Hegel in his *Philosophy of History*. The two leading ideas which Hegel unfolds are those of Reason and Freedom. The fundamental thought of his system is that there is Reason in human history. This Reason, it must be remembered, is absolute and really unconscious, and yet it energizes in society, and it is the principle of the development of humanity which unfolds itself in the varied facts of history. The fact of Freedom follows from that of Reason. The history of the human race is just its progress according to Reason towards Freedom. This Freedom is not so much power of choice, as conformity to what is rational, whereby men become spiritually free. These are Hegel's principles, but we cannot follow them out through the various periods of the world's history as presented by him.

There is an important truth in Hegel's view. It emphasizes the truth that amidst the myriad facts of human history there is a Reason and a Will, there is thought and freedom. The development of history is not blind and irrational, nor is it under the iron heel of fate or necessity. Hegel, however, does little more than state the problem which really demands to be solved. Whose Reason and Will is this which we see in history? Is it man's own? It cannot be, for man feels that he is not entirely his own governor, but under a higher power and control. Is this reason and freedom merely immanent in the march of history, and in no sense transcendent? It may be that this is all that Hegel meant by his theory, but we cannot think that he should have rested in this conclusion. This idea or reason which is in history can only be adequately accounted for by the hypothesis of a transcendent reason. The principle of sufficient ground demands the theistic postulate. This postulate will fully explain all the facts, and will

provide a stable and ample ground for the reason and will which announce themselves in the history of the world.

A second attempt to give a philosophy of history was made by Schlegel in his *Philosophy of History*. His conception is loftier than that of Hegel. The materials found in history are the result of the conflict between what is human and what is divine in the activity of the race. The goal towards which history tends is the restoration of man to the image of God. In this conception there is an element of truth, which gives a good starting point for the theistic inference. Christlieb and Ebrard take substantially the same ground in stating the function of Apologetics, and the aim of Christianity.

The inference here is clear. We can connect human history into an organized unity or whole only on the hypothesis that there is a God, who is intelligent, moral and free, and who governs men and nations. The life of man is not made up of a series of detached and arbitrary details, but man feels that there is over him a power which he should heed, and a will that he should obey. The sum total of the history of the race is not merely a vast mass of unrelated and unmeaning facts, but it is the orderly product of the administration of a power which is intelligent, free and moral. To give detailed illustration here is out of the question. We have room only to state, in this very brief way, the proper principle by means of which we may interpret history. Many able and popular treatises, after the manner of the "Hand of God in History," supply abundant illustration of the true nature of the events which have happened in the march of history. To these we must refer for details here. All we can do now is to emphasize the truth of the position, that we have in the theistic conception of the history of mankind and of the destiny of the human race, a natural and sufficient explanation of all the facts which come before us in this connection. No other view of history can give such an explanation. Only the Theist can understand and interpret history aright.

The value of this historic method is of a very high order. Even if the materialist could hold the ground on the field of nature, and explain all things in the heavens and on the earth of a purely physical character, yet the facts of human history would still call for explanation. And even if the intellectual and moral constitution of man could be explained apart from the theistic hypothesis, we are satisfied that the agnostic does not hold in his hand the key to unlock the secret of the real meaning of history.

It would be easy here to rise a step higher than Theism, and find materials to confirm Christianity as well, in what we see in history. God's spiritual kingdom is the scene of his empire here below. The laws of that kingdom are for the government of men. Redemption comes in to restore the harmony that has been broken. Christ is the central figure of history. The history of mankind can only be understood in relation to Christ and His kingdom. This being the case, the inference which the facts of history justify is of the very highest order. By means of it we stand at the threshold of Christianity, ready to pass in by the gateway of revelation to the secrets of the spiritual kingdom itself. With the hand upon the lifted latch reason leaves us standing on that threshold.



CHAPTER IX.

THE CONCLUSION.

We have now travelled over the ground which the plan of this essay required us to review. We shall not forget that in such an extensive field the discussion could only be cursory in its nature. In a few concluding remarks we may briefly recapitulate some of the main points which have come before us, and indicate the general conclusions which have been reached.

The two great questions with which Theism is concerned are the origin of the idea of God in the human mind, and the proof or vindication of the divine existence. These questions, though in their nature closely related, must be kept apart in the course of their discussion. In regard to the former of these questions, we found that the origin of theistic ideas lies, primarily, in neither natural evolution, in divine objective revelation, nor in any kind of a reasoning process. It is to be found in intuition properly understood, and it is given to us in its primitive form as the native deliverance of our very constitution. The ground or cause of the idea in the human mind, it was hinted, may be found in God's own testimony, as an inspiration in the spirit of man, to His own actual existence.

The methods of proof which deal with the second great question of Theism were considered in order. These methods were arranged in eight classes, though some of them are so closely related that they almost run into one another. In several of the

methods we have nearly the same principle of inference, but it is applied to different materials of proof. These proofs were merely outlined, and an estimate given of their respective import and value.

In regard to what we should expect from these so-called proofs, a remark may be made. Some writers have set too high a value upon them, and others have put too low an estimate on what they may do for us. Let us try to secure the golden mean here, and, perhaps, we will then be as near the truth as we can get.

In the first place, it is not the function of these proofs to originate Theism, or to produce the idea of God in the mind. It is admitted that by means of argument and the force of reasons a sceptic may be led to believe in God. But, observe that this cannot mean that he had no idea of God in his mind previous to the effect which argument may have had upon him. Even when he denied God, if his denial was intelligent, he necessarily had some idea of the Being whose existence he was denying. Scepticism does not lie against the reality of the idea of God, but rather against his actual or objective existence. This goes to show that reasoning or proof does not produce the idea, nor explain its origin in the human mind.

In the second place, it is not the function of these methods of proof to *demonstrate* the existence of God with strict logical precision. Mathematical certainty and moral certainty are different in their nature. The methods of theistic proof give us the latter rather than the former. With the exception of the eso-theistic, and certain forms of the onto-theistic method, all the methods proceed on the principles of induction, causation and sufficient reason. Though the proof moves in what may be called the sphere of probability, yet it may be of the very strongest and most cogent kind. We should observe, also, that when we make an induction, and bring the theistic hypothesis to explain any given problem we use the idea of God, and make the hypothesis of the objective validity of that idea the unknown x which solves the equation.

This being the case, the function of proof and reasoning about God is really to vindicate the rational character of the intuitive or native conviction of the human mind that there is a divine Being. If our discussion of the various methods of proof has gone to show, in any satisfactory way, that Theism is a rational belief, and that its denial is at least unreasonable, then we have secured, on grounds of reason, all we require in order to provide a rational basis for Christianity. If we find, therefore, that the theistic conception of the natural world, of man, and of society and its history is consonant with reason, and that it sheds light on many of the dark problems which come before us all along the way, then we shall be more than justified in entertaining this conception. We shall be content, moreover, to entertain it till a better is given us. If the Theist holds in his hands the golden key which enables him to unlock mysteries before which the atheist must stand helpless, and the sceptic look on with wonder, surely we shall be wise if we join company with the Theist. We shall be contented if the discussion of this essay has helped to show that Theism is capable of rational confirmation, and that it has unquestioned right to claim that it is a reasonable and well founded belief. If we have shown that it is the atheist, not the Theist, who is illogical, our work has been successful.

In the third place, it is to be observed that the discussion of Theism not only vindicates the rational nature of theistic belief, but it also enlarges and defines the primitive knowledge of, and belief in, God which is connatural in the human mind. As we have seen, this original primitive knowledge is at first little more than a vague conviction *that* God is, rather than a clear knowledge of *what* God is. The theistic conviction is at first a vague feeling, a gentle whisper, or a distant echo. This conviction attests or witnesses to the Being towards which that feeling points, and to the Being whose voice is heard in the secret recesses of the soul. The objective revelation of the Bible comes in to enlarge and make

clear this intuitive belief. Reasoning in all proper forms also renders important service in the same direction. One of the great uses of the methods of proof, which we have been discussing, is to unfold to us some of the attributes of God. God being given in intuition, can be understood by reason ; and what He is may be made known, in part at least, thereby. If we had space to follow out this remark, we would see how each one of the methods comes with its tribute of knowledge to increase the degree of definiteness which the idea of God may assume. Being, spirituality, unity, efficiency, consciousness, personality, intelligence, infinity, moral perfection, and righteous government will all clearly emerge as the result of our discussion. Then, further, if we reach by means of the methods of proof this enlarged and definite knowledge of God, it is clear that many false theories which claim to be theistic must be rejected. Not only is atheism excluded by the very conditions of the problem, but materialism, pantheism, and even deism are also ruled out by an adequate rational presentation of the methods of proof. The conception of one personal God, who is first cause and moral governor, thus clearly appears above the horizon. Revelation and Reason unite in enlarging our primitive theistic conviction into a well defined monotheistic belief.

In the last place, a good deal might be said in regard to the best order in which to present these various proofs, so as to secure their greatest argumentative force. We cannot go fully into this discussion now, however. One line of proof may have most weight with one man, and another line with another man. One mode of reasoning may be more effective against one false view, and another against another error. We may rejoice that, when all the proofs are massed together, they form such a strong array of evidence that a man cannot reject it without doing violence to the deepest convictions of his intellectual and moral nature. A man may deny that there is a God, just as a man may put his hand in the fire, but in both cases violence is done.

Our discussion enables us also to see something of the relation subsisting between God and the universe. The universe must be from God, and hence it is not self-existent, nor is it eternal. The natural order of the physical universe, and the moral order under which man is placed, alike testify to the truth of this conclusion. Nature is not all there is ; but nature, is only because God is. And again, since nature has the marks of order and design, since man has rational, moral and religious intuitions, and since human history shows plain marks of a moral purpose running through the ages, we believe that we are justified in concluding that God, who is first cause, real being, and absolute efficiency, possesses those attributes which these features of nature and of man unfold. We thus reach a conclusion, on good rational grounds, which lays a strong and suitable foundation for revelation and redemption to rest on, as they proceed to unfold the Christian system. That foundation is at once a rational theology and a theistic cosmology.

THE END.



